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MODEST

AND FREE
CONFERENCE

BETWIXT

A *Conformist* and a *Non-conformist*, about the present distempers of Scotland.

Ex Libris Bibliothecae Edinburgensis

In six Dialogues. 1670

By a Lover of Peace.

Gal. 5. 15.

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed ye be not devoured one of another.

Published by Order.

Printed Anno Dom. 1669.



MODEST

CONFERENCE

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. A. ...
... about the ...
... of foot-

In the Discharge

For the ... of Peace

... the ... of ...
... the ... of ...

... by ...

... 1888



The Stationer to the Reader.

Reader,

ALL the account I can give of this Book, or the *Author*, is in the following Letter which came to my hands a few dayes after I received these Sheets, and is prefixed to them in stead of a *Preface*.

For the Stationer.

THough these Dialogues were brought to you by another hand than my own, yet since it is upon my motion that they came to be Published, contrary

to the Authors design, and truly
without his order: I think my
self obliged to say somewhat of
the Author and the book, and the
rather that the Author, not being
forward to the publishing of it,
will say nothing of Preface him-
self; But withall, I am resolved
you shall be as ignorant of the
Writter of this, as of the Au-
thor of the Book.

The Author is a person of ex-
traordinary moderation and peace-
ableness: he can allow any diffe-
rence of opinion, but such as is
incompatible with the peace and
quiet of the Church. And
though there be some expressions

uly in these Dialogues that would
 my appear tart ; yet it is meerly occa-
 sioned by the zeal he hath against
 the that uncharitable spirit , which
 ing can allow of nothing that is not
 it, exactly of their own way.

im. The occasion of writting in
 ved this way, was, that a Book of the
 the same title and nature, printed in
 Au-England, came to the Author's
 hands ; and he, being pleased
 ex-with that familiar way of Writ-
 ace-ting, thought presently of compo-
 siffe-sing Dialogues suitable to our
 s is Differences here, as that was to
 and the Differences of that Nation:
 And if there be any thing in this coin-
 cident with that Book, it is in
 in such

such things as the humours of that unquiet spirit in both Nations are the same. And the Author designs not vanity by these few sheets, written, to my knowledge, in as few houres as they could hardly be transcribed; But wisheth every one to see the weakness of those grounds upon which such specious structures are built; which when they come to be examined, prove but painted sepulchres.

The great design of the Author in this small Book, is, to let some well-meaning people, who have a love to godlinesse, see that Religion is not at all concerned

of in things wherein they do concern themselves very much, and that in contending for the shell we are like to loose the kernell of Religion.

The language and manner of Writting, is accommodated to these meaner capacities, who are most apt to be abused, by such as care not, nay, which is very sad, but too true, wish not Religion nor godliness to prosper in the hands of those who differ from them in opinion about externall things, which are not of great moment: as may appear from their perswading poor souls to take for a mark of zeal that which in all
christian

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christian Nations is lookt on as
a very great mark of impiety, to
wit, not going to Church: by
which people do shew, in the most
signal manner they can, their
not owning the worship and ado-
ration of God.

The Author meant no preju-
dice to any person in writing of
it, Nor is it published upon any
such design, but in hopes that it
may inform sincere people. And
whoever reads it without preju-
dice, will I hope judge so of it.
Farewel.

as
to
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ost
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do
A modest and free Conference
betwixt a *Conformist* and a
Non-conformist, about the pre-
sent distempers of *Scotland*.

re-
g of
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And
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In six Dialogues.

DIALOGUE I.

Con. **Y**ou are welcome from the West. How
are all things there?

Non. Never worse; *The glory is departed from*
that people: and the power of godlinesse is gone
there. God pity that poor place, which was once
so Glorious.

C. I perceive by your manner of speaking, that
you are much concerned in these matters: but I
pray you tell me wherein things are turned so
much to the worse among you?

N. Alas! are you such a stranger in *Israel*, as not
to know these things? are not our gracious Mini-
sters taken from us? so that the work of God is
much born down: the brave dayes of Communi-
ons;

ons, Preachings, Prayers, are away; and in stead of the fire was once there, there remain but a few sparks in some secret corners: for, the precious Ordinances are gone.

C. What you say upon the matter, I know well enough: but do not apprehend it to be of such importance, as you seem to do.

N. What! do not you think it sad, that Christ is not Preached?

C. God forbid but he be? I do not know how it is in your Country, but I am sure with us Christ is preached very faithfully, but I fear you consider not well what it is to preach Christ; do you think to tell us only of his death, is to preach him?

N. No, no, but oh how doth my heart melt within me, when I remember how sweetly I have heard the Ministers there, clear up my interest in Christ?

C. May be it was more sweetly then sincerely for to tell you of an interest in him, while you are strangers to his Laws and Gospel, is to deceive you: since you can have no interest in the blood of Christ, till you have his Spirit dwelling in you.

N. Blessed be God, I know no name to be saved by, but the Name of Christ: And I renounce mine own righteousness, and accept of his righteousness.

C. It is very true, that we are saved by the blood of Christ: but it is as true, that we must be purified by his Spirit, else we are none of his. If by renouncing your own righteousness; you mean what you naturally can perform without grace
ye

ad of you are in the right, but if you lean so to Christs
a few righteousnesse, as to neglect to be righteous your
as On self, you with *Judas*, kils your Master, while you
betray him. And I fear your Ministers studied more
well to convince you of the need of Christs righteous-
such nesse, then of having any of your own: For in-
deed it is a cheap Religion, to lean so intirely to
Christ Christ, that we do nothing our selves.

N. We are far from thinking there is no need
w how of good works: We only exclude them from Ju-
Christ nification, which is by Faith only.

insider C. Truly your practices tell, you think there is
think as little need of them to Salvation, as to Justifica-
? tion, remember the Gospel is plain and simple, and
e mel came not to teach men Sophistry or Logick: there-
I have fore I shall not contend with you about words or
rest iphrases: for as I believe, that Christ came to *lay*
down his life a ransom for our sins; so if you be-
cerly lieve, that *without holiness we shall never see the*
ou an *face of God*, we are agreed in this matter. But I
ceive wish we all studied to live better, and then our
ood differences would quickly end.

on. N. Yes, I hear some of you are still talking of
e save holiness and peace, but you forget truth: which is
e mino necessary, that without it holiness is but hy-
teous ocricie.

C. I acknowledge that, if you speak of the funda-
e blood mental Articles of our Faith. But all truths are
e puri not of equal certainty, nor of equal importance:
If bow it is a certain and important truth, that there
mean should be an unity in the Catholick Church; which

is not to be broken, but upon a matter of greater certainty and weight.

N. One precious truth is worth all the world: therefore I will not quite one truth for the love of all men. *Not a hoof*, said Moses.

C. If you were required to condemn or deny any thing you judged truth, I confesse you ought to obey God rather than man. But it is another case to quite the communion of the Church; because they are not, as you think, in the truth: unlesse that truth be of greater importance than is the Article of your Faith, *The Catholick Church and the communion of Saints*. And when you are as sure of your call to contend for these truths, as Moses was of the will of God, you may use his words. Let me then examine you a little, how do you know your opinions are truths?

N. Who can doubt of it? are they not the cause and interest of Christ, his Kingdom and Crown, his glorious work, to which we are all bound by the oath of God taken in the Covenant, whereinto even the children unborn are oblidge.

C. If big words prove truths, you are full of them: But remember of whom the Apostle gives this Character, *they speak swelling words of vanity*. And there is no party but have the same language in their mouth: these are fine contrivances to lead away silly women captive, who would be ready to judge your blustering confidence, an evidence of truth, when a modest way of speaking is suspected of diffidence: whereas in right scales, the one looks

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like arrogant pride, and the other like the modest Spirit of Jesus Christ.

N. How can you deny, that what is now cried down, was the work of God?

C. I confesse it was so the work of God, as the Prophet said, *is there any evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it:* but in the sense you take it, it was as far from it, as darknesse is from light.

N. How can you speak so, was not sin strangely born down in our dayes?

C. I confesse you studied to repress some sins: so did the Pharisees. But remember the Apostle divides *filthinesse*, in that of the *flesh*, and of the *spirit*: and indeed, the latter proves a much subtiler and stronger opposition to the Gospel, than the former. It is true, some of these were repressed by you; though I must add, in a way, scarce suitable to the Gospel: but for other sins, you were very gentle to them, nay, were guilty of them your selves: for they mingled in all you did.

N. Now you begin to rail, and I cannot endure to hear those glorious dayes so spoken of. Is this the moderation you so much professe?

C. I love moderation as much as any can, and declare to you once for all, that I have no quarrel at any, for their opinions in these matters: nor shall I labour to disgrace the leaders of your party, by searching into their private escapes; a practice much used by you against us, your monthes being ever full of bitter reproaches against some of our lik

Christ and his Gospel, wherein we are put in mind to speak evil of no man. I shall therefore from your publick and avowed actions, and printed papers, shew how far you are out of the way of God. And first, what think you of your rebellion? this was the Soul of your whole work, and your Covenant was a Bond to cement you in this.

N. Call you fighting for God and his Cause, rebellion?

C. It is yet under debate, whether it be the Cause of God: Suppose it were, shew me one place in either Testaments, that warrands Subjects fighting for Religion? you know I can bring many against it; yea, though the old dispensation was a more carnal and fiery one, than the new one is; yet, when the Kings of *Judah* and *Israel* made Apostacy from the living God, into heathenish Idolatry, some of the Kings of *Judah* polluting the Temple of *Jerusalem*, as did *Ahaz* and *Mannasseh*, so that God could not be worshipped there, without Idolatry, yet where do we find the people resisting them, or falling to popular Reformation? Neither do the Prophets that were sent by God, ever provoke them to any such courses. And you know the whole strain of the New Testament runs upon suffering.

N. The law of nature teacheth us, to defend ourselves, and so there is no need of Scripture for it?

C. This is marvelous dealing, in other things you alwayes flee from reason, as a carnal principle to Scripture; but here you quite Scripture and Scripture appeal to it: but it seems you are yet a stranger to

mind to the very design of Religion, which is to tame
 from and mortifie nature: and is not a natural thing,
 but supernatural. Therefore the rules of defend-
 ing and advancing it, must not be borrowed from
 God. this nature, but grace: The Scriptures are also strange-
 ly contrived, since they ever tell us of suffering un-
 der persecution: without giving your exception,
 cause, that we resist when we are in a capacity. And I
 appeal to your conscience, whether it be a likelier
 way to advance Religion, fighting or suffering?
 place since a carnal man can do the one, but not the o-
 fight- ther.

ny a- N. How can we neglect the interests of Christ,
 was a and let them ruine, when we are in a capacity to
 e is; defend them?

le A- C. If there were not a God who governs the
 Idol- World, your reasoning might have force: but do
 the you think that God cannot maintain his own right,
 assehb, but the wrath of man must work his righteousness?
 with- say, we see the contrary, for from the beginning,
 le re- till this day, God hath made the sufferings of his
 ions? people, the chief mean of propagating Religion;
 God, whereas fighting hath been ever fatal to it. And
 d you Christ did begin the Gospel with his suffering,
 runs though he could have commanded Legions of An-
 gels for his defence.

d our N. Christ knew it was the Fathers will that he
 it? must suffer.

hing C. This shews how little you understand when
 iple you speak so: are not Christs injunctions our rule.
 e and Since then he forbade his Disciples to draw a sword
 anger for him, with so severe a threatening, as *whosoever*

will draw the sword, shall perish by the sword, this must binde us, and what he sayes to Pilate on this head, *My Kingdom is not of this world*, &c. is so plain language, that I wonder how it doth not convince all. I know there are some pitifull answers made to those places: but they are so irrational, that they deserve not a serious reply, and I am not of an humour to laugh at them: only take notice of this, that if an ingenuous man speak plainly, much more must the God of truth: Judge then whether these unworthy glosses, make Christ like-
er a nibling Logician, then the true and faithfull witnesse.

N. Then you condemn our first reformation carried on by fighting.

C. Since you go to examples, rather begin with the Ages that immediatly followed Christ, in which for three hundred years the Gospel was preached and propagated by sufferings, but never by fighting, though their number enabled them to it, and they were irritated by the cruellest provocations and persecutions: And it is to be supposed, that they who saw and conversed with the Apostles, understood their meaning better than these who lived at so great a distance from them: I acknowledge there was force used in our Reformation: but so much the worse for that: And you know the enemy sowes his tares, even in that field wherein the Wheat is sown. But never alledge to me the president of men, against the expresse Word of God.

N. What say you then to these who died sealing their

this their opinion, fighting for Religion, with their
this blood ?

C. You put me to a hard lock, to rake amongst
the ashes of the dead : As for those who died, I had
that compassion for some of them, that I could wil-
lingly have redeemed their lives at the rate of mine
own : And I doubt not but many sincerely follow-
ed their Conscience in it. But I am far from think-
ing the better of the Cause, because some died
handsomly for it, otherwise I should be reconciled
to Atheism, and all Heresies, who want not their
pretended Martyrs. But I need go no further then
England, at His Majesties Restauration, where the
murderers of the late King, died gallantly, own-
ing what they did as the Cause of God. So the
seal of a Martyr's blood, is not always the seal of
God.

N. Well, but why do you remember bygones ?
We are now all good Subjects, and do bless God
for His Majesties Restauration, and do pray for him
more then you do.

C. May be so, that he may be of your way ; but,
if that be not, I doubt your love to him is very
cool. I do not remember bygones to bring an odi-
um upon you, but to shew that a course which was
managed by a spirit of Rebellion, was none of
Gods. As for your rejoycing at His Majesties Re-
stauration, I scarce believe it, since you will not
keep a day of Thanksgiving for it.

N. It is not that we scruple the thing, but be-
cause you make it a holy day.

C. This is very nice, for by holy day we mean
not

not that the twenty ninth of *May* is a more sacred time, then other dayes : but that the day shall be devoted to holy exercise.

N. This should not be enjoyned by the Magistrate, but by the Church, who ought only to order the worship of God.

C. I shall not against this alledge the commands of *David* and *Solomon*, since you may alledge they were extraordinary persons ; but you cannot say that *Esther* and *Mordecai* were such, who enjoyned the observation of *Purim*, and call that Feast a good day ; and the odds betwixt holy and good is not very great. And although there be no divine order for the Feast of Dedication, yet our Saviour was at the Feast, and in the Temple : though you will not come to Church on the twenty ninth of *May*.

N. Well then, all you can charge upon us is a little disloyalty, but for all that, our way may be the Cause of God : for even the Saints have their infirmities.

C. Truly this is so great a one, that I dare pronounce none a Saint, who hath been guilty of it, till he repent of it : But I am far from being at the end of your faults, having but begun with this. The next thing perswades me of your evil way, is, your cruelty and rigour : Did you not force all to take the Covenant, severely punishing such as would not ? And did you not cruelly persecute all those who opposed you ? Truly this hath so confirmed my aversion from your way, that I hope never to be reconciled to this part of it.

N. That was a fault too, and many of us are very sensible of it.

C. Let not my soul enter into the secrets of bloody men: Your very Leaders, who if they had known any thing of the meek spirit, should have opposed these severities; not only countenanced, but drove them on, and rejoiced in them. And if they think it a fault, how comes it that none of them offers to disclaim it? Yea, some of you in your confessions of sins, and causes of wrath, rather tax your courses of too great lenity.

N. Whoever may object that, you may be silent; for what severity have we felt? how many Ministers are turned out, and people oppressed for not owning you?

C. I must in so far justify the rigour you have met with, as to show it is far short of yours. People are required to do nothing, but live peaceably, and joyn in Worship; whereas you made them swear to you: and the Ministers are not made swear to maintain the present establishment, and to root out the contrary, as you did; they are only required to concur in Discipline, and to promise submission to Episcopacy.

N. Do you not wonder at my patience, who hear you inveigh so bitterly against us? but I let you see, a Presbyterian can be calm: I hope you have done.

C. Not yet indeed; I am not trying your calmness, but your conscience, and what I speak, is not to irritate, but to convince you. I shall next take notice of the great insolence and height was among you:

you : I speak not of personal pride, though I could say enough on that Head : I only tax your publick actings. What insolence was it, to assume big names, of the godly party, and the people of God; and to call your way, The Cause and Kingdom of Christ ? Whether looks this like the Pharisees and Hypocrites, or not ? And in this you were punished with your own weapons : for the Protesters wrung that from the rest of you, and the Independants assumed it from you both.

N. I am sure we were the Godly Party, compared to those we had to do with.

C. This bewrayes your arrogance : though it were so, you ought not to bear witness to your selves, nor assume such titles. Remember the Pharisee, who said, *I thank the Lord that I am not like this Publican.* You know the loudest pretenders have not alwayes the justest title.

N. I hope now you have done with your scolding.

C. This is like all guilty persons, who take every modest representing of their faults to them, as scolding and bitterness; so did the Jews use St. Paul. It shews the sore or disease is desperate, when the Patient cannot be touched. I have not yet begun to scold, but I have not done with admonishing. Next, How did your Leaders complain of Bishops their meddling in matters of State : and yet when the Scene turned, how absolutely did they govern ? Church-men grew the advisers of all businesses, Juntoes held in their houses. And how impudently did the Church countermand the State,

Anno

Anno 1648. even in Civil matters? as were the Levying of Armies, and the paying of Taxes. And after the Tragical Catastrophe of the unlawfully called unlawful Engagement, they barred the Nobility from their priviledges as Peers, till they must be satisfied.

N. All that was done in order to Religion, which is in the Churches care.

C. This is the very Plea of the Pope: and indeed in Politicks, the Pope and the Presbyterians agree in moe things than you think on. By this Maxime all Civil matters must come under Ecclesiastical cognizance; since every action can be reduced to one of the Tables of the Law. But particularly to medle with War, and matters of Blood, hath been ever judged directly contrary to the Pastoral duty, which obligeth to feed, and not to kill. But I shall add one thing more, which was your Superstition.

N. I had resolved to have objected that to you, and I am sure we cannot be guilty of it, since there is nothing we hate more?

C. You know not the true notion of it, and so are guiltier then you are aware of. Superstition is an over-rating of things, as if God were more pleased with them, than indeed he is: And therefore to lay too great weight upon any thing, is superstition. He then that judgeth a thing of it self indifferent, to be necessary: And he that condemns it as unlawful, are equally superstitious. It were a long and tedious story, to let you see how great weight you laid upon many small matters, both in doing

doing and forbearing. But I will leave particulars to your conscience ; and I protest in all I have said, I have no other design, but to teach you not to have mens persons or wayes too much in admiration.

N. You have now run out in a long and furious career against us: hear me next, reckon the excellent things were amongst us, and I doubt not you shall confesse our good did far preponderat our evil.

C. I shall hear you with all my heart, but in the mean time let us take a little refreshment and respite.

N. Be it so.

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the world, resignation, humility, meeknesse, patience, obedience, charity, abstraction of minde, and the other great heights of Christian Religion; but you tell me only of their external devotion, which how good soever it be, yet is far from being the Character of a Christian; since the very Pharisees were eminent in those things.

N. I told you, you were carnal, and savoured not the things of God; you look after morality, as the great matter: but we look after true Christianity.

C. If by morality, you mean the affecting a virtuous behaviour, without a dependance on God and Christ, I have as low an account of it as any man can have; but if by morality, you mean a pure and holy Conversation, I doubt it is the greatest and best part of Religion: Without which, the other parts are but hypocrisie and formality. But I shall examine all these things which seem to knit your hearts so much to that way: And shall begin with their diligence in repressing sin. I confesse they had a kind of Discipline: but it was wholly different from the rules of the Gospel, and far short of the ancient Bishops discipline.

N. I see you undervalue every thing we did, but I am sure you have no reason for it.

C. First then, were not your Church-Sessions like Birla-Courts, where every one came and complained of wrongs, which belonged to the Magistrature: for the Church should only meddle with sins, as they are Scandals, and not as they are injuries. Next, Dilations, according to our Lord's

rule, should not be received, till the person be first privately admonished by the party offended; next, by two or three; and if he be obstinat, the Church should be told: But you observed no such rule. Next you imposed and exacted Fines, which was the Magistrate's work; whereas the Church should take no money, but what is offered in Charity. You also forced people to stoop to your Discipline, for if they refused, you threatned them with the temporal sword: which by the unhappinesse of the times, was too much at your dispose. And this sheweth, that you did not carry on the Gospel, by a Gospel-spirit, though that was ever in your mouthes, but by secular wayes: for, offenders should come and offer themselves to Discipline, and not be driven to it. The time wherein your penance lasted, was also short: the ancient Bishops did separate offenders, as many years, as you did weeks. It is also clear, you used Discipline to put a temporal shame upon offenders: For you set them in a high place to be gadded upon, whereas they should have been rather kept without the doors of the Church. And to conclude, how wretchedly did you abuse this? subjecting people to censure, for your trifling matters, when you knew they were acting a mock-penitence: and were more zealous to preach against oppositions to your courses, than against the oppositions to the everlasting Gospel.

N. Now you tax us for what we were very free: Was ever sin so boldly reprov'd, as in our pulpits? Our Ministers sparing no rank nor quality.

C

C. I con-

C. I confesse some things, I say not sins, you re-
 proved boldly enough: not sparing the Lord
 Anointed, whose pretended faults, you, like so many
 unnatural *Hams*, were ready enough to publish
 when your so doing, could have no other effect
 but to irritate his Subjects against him. How o-
 ten was that sacred Prince charged with Popery
 Tyranny, and the Massacre of *Ireland*? and the
 Royal Family termed, the bloody-house? yet
 after his accursed enemies had murdered him
 when common humanity should have obliged you
 to let the dead alone, and Christianity should have
 taught you to have had more reverent thoughts
 of one who died so piously and devoutly; yet you
 ceased not to persecute and tear his memory
 which in spite of your malice, will be glorious
 all posterity: and that with the height of in-
 solence and barbarity, in the very hearing and pre-
 sence of his Son, who now reigneth. This was
 your bold reproving of faults. But how little
 were you in secret reproving faults? When you
 got to the Pulpit, there indeed you triumphed
 because you knew none were to oppose you. Now
 it is certain, reproofs should be begun in private
 and not brought to publick; but upon the
 obstinate rejecting of private admonitions,
 for what end were you often so bitter to absent
 This, and such other things could be upon no
 other design, but either maliciously to disgrace
 them, or to get a following among your party
 and the name of faithfull, free, and zealous pre-
 achers.

M. You speak with very great heat and passion, against better men than your self, and better preachers than ever any of your way will be.

C. May be so, I wish both they and their Gifts had been seven-fold better than they were: but if I shall judge of them, either by their printed Sermons, or those I have heard, they are no extraordinary things. And first, The half of their Sermons were upon publick matters: and what did these concern the Souls of the poor people? Was not this for bread, to give them a stone? Next, for the solid practises of a Christian life, I scarce ever heard them named, except overly. Whom heard you preach against the love of the world, seeking of esteem, quarrelling, seeking of revenge, anxiety and passion? Vertue was little preached, and far lesse practised.

N. I am sure we heard much spiritual Doctrine from them; for, these are common matters.

C. Read our Saviours Sermons, particularly, his longest upon the mount, and you shall finde these to be the great subjects of his discourse: I confesse they are common, but remember the commonest things are often most usefull. As for your spiritual Doctrine, the true heights of spirituality were as little preached, as the living much in abstraction, silence and solitude, the being often in the still contemplations of God and Christ, the becoming dead to all things else, spending dayes and nights in secret sittings and prayers, how seldom were these things spoken of?

C.

N. What

N.

N. What then make you of them, since you do not allow them to be spiritual doctrine?

C. I shall not deny but they were spiritual, but I add, they were of a very low size and degree, and such as could never carry on the Auditors to any great perfection, and most of them were practised by the Pharisees. You know they read the Scripture, and knew it so exactly, as no Christians do their Bibles: they observed the Sabbath severely, they prayed many and long prayers. So that these external things, are but the fringes of true Religion.

N. We heard Christ and him crucified preached much.

C. It was well if ye did, but let me tell you, Christ was so preached, as to cry up a bare relying on him, without obedience to his Gospel, in that I fear too many did, this was a very antichristian way of preaching Christ. Next, you got among you a world of nice subtilties, which you called Cases of Conscience, and these were handled with so metaphysical curiosities, that I know not what to make of them: And the people that should have been driven out of these, into the great ordinances and practices of a Christian life, were too much flattered and humoured in them. I am sure our Saviour, and the Penmen of Scripture had no such stuff.

N. This still discovers your carnal heart: God help you who understand not the wayes of the Spirit.

C. Never tell me of other wayes of the Spirit can

about holiness, charity, and humility, &c. I do not deny but some devout people will be under doubts and fears, but this is a weakness which ought not to be fed and humoured in them, and such scruples are to be satisfied in private. But to hear people, who lead but common lives, talk of such things, is unsufferable. I shall not here take notice of their strange methods, which they so much admired in preaching: though I could tell you how our Saviour and the Apostles used none of these: but I shall be sparing in this, it not being of so great, or necessary concernment.

N. O but what powerfull Sermons were theirs! they made my very heart shake.

C. I am glad it was so, but see that by power you do not mean a tone in the voice, a grimace in the face, or a gesture and action, or some strange phrases, these indeed affect the vulgar much: but long considering people see through them, and value them little. *The voice of God was a still voice, with Christ was not heard in the streets.*

N. But there were many converted by the preachings, and then there was a great love to the word, people running far to hear it.

C. Truly I am so far from envy, that I wish from my Soul, where one was converted by you, such thousand had been. But see that by conversion you do not mean only, a change in opinion, or outward behaviour, which might be done upon interest: and remember that there was a kind of Prodiges, even to the service of God, who thereby became more the children of the devil, than they

were. And see that you do not mistake every heat in the fancie for a conversion; one thing I must challenge you of, that you call alwayes your preachings, the word of God, for to term them so, and yet to confesse, you may be mistaken in them, is a contradiction, since Gods word is infallible: Your texts indeed are the word of God, but your glosses on them, are but the words of fallible men: Now this was a great Art to conciliate a hudge veneration and authority to your preachings; for you called them the words of the Lord, and applied all the places of Scripture that belonged to the inspired and infallible preachers, unto your selves, that so you might be Rabbies indeed.

N. I, but their lives was preaching, and they looked like the Gospel indeed.

C. I am far from denying that there were very good men among you, and there are some of them whom I know to have the fear of God before their eyes: but I must say, they seem to be little advanced above babes in Christ. For your great men, how strangely did they involve themselves in all busineses? and truly a meddling temper, looks not like a devout one: but, what great spirituality appeared amongst most of them? Leaders of Churches and parties should be alwayes commending God and Religion to people, and truly hear there is little of this in their mouthes; shrewd presumption that there is not too much of it in their hearts.

N. Alas! you know us not, we seldom meet

but

but we expound Scripture, and have spiritual exercise amongst us.

C. I confesse you have enough that way, but that looks more artificial and formal, but in your discourse, how few of your words are *seasoned with salt, ministring grace to the hearers*? which is a more genuine and native, and so a more convincing way of commending Godliness to people. But what great things of devotion, or holiness, appear amongst you? who of you despise the world? give away your goods to the poor? who bear injuries without resentments and revenge? who are willing to be set at nought? who are mortifying themselves even in the lawfull pleasures of sense? who bear crosses without murmurings? and for the devotional part, who of you seem to live only to God, and consecrate your time and strength to divine exercises? truly these things are as little among you as any party I know: nay, one thing I cannot passe by, that you generally seem so desirous of being noticed in your Religion; this is far from our Saviours practice.

N. This is all your prejudicat opinion against us, but had you been ever with us at our Communions, you would have been forced to confesse that God was amongst us.

C. I never denied it, for I am far from being so hidebound, as to affix God to a party, as you too confidentlie do. But for your Communions, I am not like to be much convinced by them, I cannot like your running so many miles to them, this is

tumultuarie and disorderlie; for if it be the Sacrament it self you value, you may have it nearer hand: but this shews, you idolize men too much. Next, at your Communions, all your businesse is to hear and talk, whereas the truest preparation for that work, is, an inward stillnesse and recollection of mind; and certainly much talk at that time, particularly in the very action it self, doth but draw out, and disturb the mind: and by reason of your crouds, you cannot have occasion of such retirement as is necessary at so solemn a time. And to speak plainly, I cannot think persons very devout, who love rather to hear one talk, were it never so good purposes, than to retire inwardly and commune with their own hearts, and with God. Some of you will be many hours in publick worship, and perhaps not a quarter of an hour in secret devotions. It would look liker Christ, to be many hours secret in prayer, and very short in publick.

N. I see nothing among us pleaseth you, but we are never the worse for all that.

C. Truly I cannot admire what I judge but simple and mean. But another fault about your Communions, was, that you had them so seldom, against the expresse practice of the Apostles, who continued daily breaking Bread: and the whole Church in all ages and places, were frequent in this, which you brought to once a year. And who taught you to separate it from the rest of the solemn worship, and not have it every Lords day?

N. That

N. That was, that by the unfrequency of it, it might be the more solemn.

C. Then at length you confesse, you use your own devices, to make the worship of God more solemn. But it had been much liker the Apostles, to have celebrate frequently, but withall to have noticed well such as did receive.

N. Did you never observe the great devotion in our worship?

C. Truly I am sorry, I saw so little of it: what irreverence is it, that when prayer is in the Church, most of you sit on your breeches? is this to approach unto God with the reverence becomes dust and ashes? notwithstanding of the expresse command of Scripture, *O come let us worship, and bow down, and kneel down before the Lord our Maker*, and you cannot say this was one of *Moses* rites.

N. God looks not to the outward man, it is the inward bowing and kneeling of the soul he regards; and it is your superstition to stand much at these outward things.

C. But we are commanded to glorifie God, as well with our bodies, as with our spirits. And how unhandsome is it, that we will not testifie that reverence to God, we would shew to a man, were he but a few degrees above us? beside, you who alwayes call for Scripture, ought quickly to be convinced here? most Scripture-prayers being said, either to be in that posture, or in that which comes next in reverence to it, to wit, standing. Our Saviour kneeled when he prayed to the Father.

ther. *St. Paul*, both at *Miletus* and *Tyre* kneeled down, and prayed with the people: though in *Tyre*, it was upon the shore, a pretty inconvenient place for kneeling. You know how much Scripture I can bring, for kneeling or standing.

N. But it is written, *David* *sate* before the Lord, and prayed.

C. But is not this strange; that you will bring one practice, and follow that rather than the constant and universal practice registrated in Scripture? Beside, the word there doth not import that he *sate*, but rather that he *sifted himself before the Lord*. And then you do not consider that prayer was private, and it is undoubted, more solemnity is necessary in publick, than in the private worship. Why then do you not kneel or stand in Churches, since you do so in secret, and in your Family-worship? and why not as well, if not rather in the one, nor in the other? truly this bewrayes both great weaknesse, and great irreverence. And beside the irreverence of that wretched posture of sitting, it is so convenient for your ease, that we see most fold themselves to sleep in the prayers: and such as do not so, seem to listen to the prayer, as they do to the Sermon, without thinking they are to joyn in it. And indeed to sit, is so grosse an abuse in prayer, unlesse some bodily infirmity impose it, that I rather not see you come to our Churches, than come to them thus to give a bad example.

N. But since you named Family-worship, take but notice what order was amongst our Families, they

they looking like little Churches: Our Masters of Families praying, praising, and expounding Scripture, with their Families; what, was not this a heavenly thing?

C. I do approve of a part of it, and think it a pious and a Christian custom, to have Families worshipping God together, providing the way of it be grave and regular: of which I shall speak afterwards. But for Masters of Families, their expounding Scripture, it is intollerable, unlesse they be very intelligent persons. How patent a way otherwise may this prove, for venting and broaching errors, and heresies? but I would not have you value this too much: Otherwise I shall send you to the religious houses in the Church of Rome, where they have worship seven hours a day, in a word, those external things make not men good of themselves.

N. But I hope you will not condemn private meetings, especially when a Minister is with us for spiritual conference.

C. Truly the thing in it self looks fair and well, but since these secret assemblings have been much scandalized, since also they may be a cloak for hatching mischievous practices, and for debauching peoples minds into schism and faction, and to a contempt of the Publick Worship, they are not to be used. Let people meet as oft as they will in Church for Worship: and what is not fit to be said in a Church, is not fit to be said in a Chamber full of people. Such persons as desire resolution for their scruples, ought to ask it in private, and
not

not in these thronged Conventicles. Since in such matters the more private one be, the more like he is to the lowly spirit : and the more talking he be, he looks liker one that affects a name, and to be thought somewhat. The Gospel is a humble, simple thing, whereas formal affected stuff, looks like the spirit of pride, and Pharisaical vanity, at least it gratifies it too much.

N. I see you will not allow us the praise we truly deserve, but it is no matter, our record is on high. The men in the world alwayes set at naught the children of God, but at least you cannot deny us this glory, that were long in great unity.

G. I love not the spirit of detraction, but I confess I wonder to see a party cryed up to the Heavens for nothing ; since I can speak it with great sincerity, I could never see any thing amongst you, that could raise in me any great veneration for you. And I am sure, what ever do it, your unity will never do it. It is true, as long as you had to do with these, whom you most unchristianly, and maliciously called the Malignants, you were one, as *Simeon* and *Levi* were : but when ever that was done, you quickly broke amongst your selves, and to let see how keen you were upon your contention, even though the ground of your first breach was soon taken out of the way ; yet you kept up your differences, with as much heat, as if they had been the great matters of Christian Religion. How fierce were you one against another, in your Papers, Sermons, and Prayers ?
You

You had so inured the Pulpit to scolding, that in many places it was the vulgar Dialect of that place; and this you did publicly in the sight of the Sun. Yea, so hot were you on both sides, that you would listen to no accommodation, nor to any few (they were very few) who would have brought things to a temper.

N. This was our fault, but you exaggerate the matter too much;

C. I do it but with truth, and to shew that the spirit moved among you, was so contentious, that when you had no bodie to contend with, you fought amongst your selves. Yea, upon the happy revolution; how hot was the Partie among you which prevailed against the other, and was beginning snaply to depose them, till you were allarm'd that the Bishops were coming in, and so left it to them?

N. Now you are malicious, to inveigh so against us, you know I can repay you in your own coin. I will then go to, and examine your way next.

C. I never doubt, but you can scold well, but we have had a sharp bout of it, we will therefore draw breath a little.

DIALOGUE III.

N. **B**y all you have hitherto said, one should expect there were some extraordinary sublime thing among you; but he that looks on must confess, that all these defects you charge on us, are far more amongst you; besides, you come short of us, in what you acknowledge was good amongst us. So that you have all our evil, and none of our good: And you dare not deny, but in our dayes *Scotland* looked liker a Christian Church than it doth at this day.

G. Do not mistake me, as if I were so engaged to any interest, or party, as blindly to defend it which most of you commit: I am so far Episcopall, as to love the Order, and to live in peace and submission under it. But I never swore fealty to any Sect. My hearty wish, and daily earnest prayer to God, is, that all these distinguishing parties were buried, and out of head, that with united force we may all joyn to advance the true and everlasting designs of the Gospel. As for the sins many among us are guilty of, I abhor the thought of patronizing them; and, may be, some of us, though we love not in publick to be eye speaking of the times, whereby peoples minds are easily bribed to a contempt of the Governours; a sin little noticed by you: yet in secret mourn for these things as bitterly as any of you do.

do. But remember you your selves are guiltier of the present looseness, than perhaps you think.

N. How can that be, since for as bitter as you are against us, you dare not charge us with countenancing of vice.

C. But you make Religion such a cloak to so many State-designs, that this makes too many impiously to suspect Religion to be but a design of it self. Beside, you drove people to an outward compliance with you, in many of your forms, against their hearts, which hath made them nauseat at all Religion: not being able to judge betwixt Religion and these mistakes. But that which is of greatest weight, is, that our Saviour knits the abounding of iniquity, with the waxing cold in love; now, how faulty you are in this, I shall easily demonstrate.

N. No peace, saith my God, to the wicked; you ever charge our hating of sin, as uncharitableness: whereas this is but zeal for God and his truth.

C. These are the false glosses you put on things, but take notice of the humour of your people, you are apt to judge us in these matters which are doubtful disputations, and think a man no good Christian except he be of your Party. Next, you are ever listening to, and spreading a great many rattles of us, which are the great subjects of your discourse; and what can be more uncharitable than this is? You also carry sourly, and unkindly to us, as if we were of another Religion, and shun all converse or friendship with us: You likewise cast very odious aspersions upon us, as
Apostates,

Apostates, Changlings, Time-servers, and the like. and some of you rail at us, most petulantly: Now whereas you alwayes talk of persecution, truly it is more on our side than yours: for, to an ingenuous spirit, if he be not much above all these things, such usage chiefly when it is universal, is a far greater trial, than to suffer a little in the world.

N. Truly I do not deny, but too much of that you speak is true, and I wish there were more charity on all sides. But, are not most of you Apostates, Changlings, and Time-servers?

C. What invidious work is it for you to fasten that Brand, which the Christian Church only stained those with, who fell off from Christianity to Heathenism, upon the leaving of a party? Looks not this like the spirit of the Devil? Just as if one should apply all the places in the Epistles against the horrid heresies and crimes of the Gnosticks, to every little errour, which you are ready enough to do. And as for changing, except you make it a reproach for a man to grow wiser, it can be none for a man to see he was once mistaken. This generation was engaged by you, ere they could well consider things, to your way, and your oaths, and then you strive to keep them alwayes in a non-age, by telling them they must be stedfast, and that it is a snare after vowes to make enquiry. And what strange doctrine is it, to tax an obedience to the Laws of the Kingdom (when in our consciences we can so do) as time-serving?

Nay,

May, perhaps as I hinted before, you are the greater time-servers.

N. Well, though I owe charity to your persons, yet I owe none to your wayes, and I call what is black, black, therefore I can never be reconciled to your Episcopacy.

C. This head falls asunder in two things; The one is, a general consideration of that Government; The other is, supposing it were as you think it, how far you ought to separate from what is amisse. Now, tell me what are your quarrels at Episcopacy?

N. I cannot think that Church-men should be called Lords, and be great persons.

C. This belongs not to the thing it self, but is an addition of the Christian Magistrates; and, Sir, or Lord, and Gentleman, and Nobleman differ but in degree: Since then a Minister, were he never so meanly born, gets the temporal honour of a Gentleman put upon him, why may not the temporal honour of a Lord, be as well put upon a Bishop? surely this must not be considered by you.

N. But they should not Lord over Gods heritage: therefore away with your Lord Bishop.

C. If you understand all Scriptures as you do this, you may write excellent Commentaries: for, by Lording, is meant a tyrannical domination, as the word clearly imports, and not a title. Next, Gods heritage, which you apply to the Clergy, is not in the Text. All in the Greek, is, not tyrannizing over your Lots or divisions: and

with whatever reason you put down Bishops from being as Noblemen, that same will prove, your Ministers ought not to be Gentlemen, except they be born such; and I fear your Leaders will have no minde to this.

N. But this is not all: my chief quarrel against Bishops is, that they are a function of mans deviling, and no where instituted by God.

C. Truly you may speak soberly here, for before I meddle with this, I will shew in a few things, that however you talked bigly of *ius divinum*, yet you minded it as little as any could. Your Lay-Elders, though I deny them not to be a good institution, are founded on no Scripture, as now the most judicious of your party own: For when you urge, that because the Apostle gives rules only for Bishops and Deacons, that the other order of Diocesan Bishops must be shuffled out; how at that same time did you not see, that ruling Elders were not there? and the places you alledge for them, are so abused, that it appears you first resolve to maintain them, and next to seek Scripture-proof for them. The Brethren in the Council of the Apostles, proves too much, that they are judges of doctrine; which yet you will not own. Beside, it is absurd to think that was Church Judicature, as shall soon appear. That of ruling with diligence, is fond; for there, is made an remuneration of Christian duties, and if you make an office for all there, we shall have more ranks of Church-men, then they of Rome have. And it is palpable, that by helps and Governments, are meant

some

some extraordinary Gifts. Who would not pity men who build upon such sandy foundations?

N. But what say you to the Elders that rule well?

C. Truly this is far from instituting an office; for, this speaks of an office then in being; so, by some other place, you must prove their institution. There are five or six several glosses put on these words; but I protest, I think any of them appears more genuine than yours. That which I conceive the true sense of the words is, Let such among you as are fixt to rule particular charges, be doubly honoured: but especially those Evangelists, who have no meddling with rule, but labour in word and doctrine. Thus you see how ill grounded your Elders are. Next, how want you Deacons?

N. It seems you know our Discipline ill; that know not we had Deacons.

C. I know very well you had somewhat called Deacons, but this was only a name to deceive the people, who otherwise might have been startled, to have found Deacons in their Bibles, and not in your Churches; but I tell you, your Deacons are no Scripture-deacons, who were not as yours are, Lay-persons, but Ecclesiastick, and separate by the imposition of hands for that function; and so were to continue. Beside, where was it ever heard of, that a Church-office was taken from any, without a fault? whereas you yearly altered your Elders and Deacons. Next, why wanted you Diaconesses, since the Scripture is so particular about them,

telling of their order, of their being received to it, of their Qualifications, of their Age, and of their Imployment ?

N. Truly I have heard many of our Ministers say, the want of them was a fault.

C. Next, why wanted you Evangelists, since there are still men who have peculiar eminencies in preaching ? why should they be confined to one charge, and not to be made to preach over a countrey, as they shall be called ?

N. That was an extraordinary thing, which was in the dayes of the Apostles.

C. This is well asserted : any thing in Scripture that makes for you, call it ordinary, and what doth not please you, is extraordinary. But truly, since it is impossible to get a whole Church served with such a Ministry, as were to be desired, it seems to be necessary, even in those dayes, to have an office of Evangelists. But further, in what place of Scripture read you your classical Subordination of Sessions to Presbyteries, &c ? This I acknowledge is rational and orderly, but founded upon no divine right.

N. How did they of *Antioch* send up to these at *Jerusalem* ? and are not the *Spirits* of the *Prophets* subject to the *Prophets* ?

C. By the last place, it is clear, he is speaking of Parochial Churches, which subjection none deny, but for the former, it is ridiculous to urge it, since it is certain they of *Antioch* sent not up to *Jerusalem*, either as to a Church superior to it, or as to an Oecumenick Council, but to men there

there, who were immediatly inspired by God : as the *Jews* consulted the high Priest his *Urim* and *Thummim* ; and if that was a Council, then all Councils may speak in their stile, which none but a *Papist* can say. For to preface our acts, with, *It seems good to the Holy Ghost*, and yet to say, we are subject to error, is a contradiction. And thus the subordination of your Courts was a meer humane device ; so that if the *jus divinum* be the rule, the Independants had the better of you. But as for your Discipline, what warrand of Scripture have you for it ?

N. The excommunicating the Incestuous person, and the noting those that walk disorderly, &c.

C. I do not deny, but there are clear grounds for separating scandalous persons from our Worship ; but, why so many dayes ? and why in a place of repentance ? and why the use of Sack-cloath sometimes ? is not this the device of men ? bringing Scripture for it ?

N. Sure the Church hath power to do in these things, as shall tend most to order : and the dayes, place, and habit, are but external things.

C. Now I have you at a great advantage, though you understand it not. Why may the Church impose such dayes of penitence, and not as well order all for the sins of the year to be in penitence all the time of Lent ? And why is one place made a part for Penitents to be in, and may not another with as good and better reason be made the proper place for Communicating ? And why may not a Church-man officiate

in a Surplice, as well as a penitent put on Sack-cloth? since the one is a ceremony expresse of repentance, as well as the other is of innocence: and both were equally practised under the Law.

N. I confesse, I did not think on these things, but I believe our Ministers have answers to them.

C. You may well believe, for you shall never see it, for there is no imaginable difference betwixt them: One thing I confesse, that a man once resolved not to believe a thing, if he have any subtiltie of spirit, will make a shift to say somewhat upon any thing. But I have not done with shewing your deformity with the Scripture-pattern; since then we were just now speaking of the Council at *Jerusalem*, why do you not observe that Law?

N. Because that was only to bury the Synagogue with honour, and as for the meats offered to idols, *St. Paul* takes that away.

C. This is like you, still to devise fancies against expresse Scripture; where sayes the Scripture, that was done to please the Jews? as for *St. Paul*, consider that he wrote his Epistle before he went to *Jerusalem*, and yet *St. James* tels him these things were still observed there; which shews, that a thing may be obligatory in one place, and not in another: and so, that in these externals, commands are not intended for lasting obligations. Next, why use you not washing of feet, since there is no Sacrament set down more punctually in Scripture? The Element is, Water, the Action, washing the feet, the Institution, *as I have done, so do ye, and ye*

ought to wash one anothers feet, and the spiritual use of it, is humility. Why do you not therefore use this rite?

N. Why do not you use it, since you cannot refuse the Scripture more than we?

C. For all such matters, I have a clear answer, that in these externals, God intended no perpetual obligation; and therefore in them I follow the practice of the Catholick Church. Next, in your Worship, why do you not kisse one another with a holy kisse? why do you not anoint the sick with oyl, as St. *James* commandeth?

N. It is clear, that was extraordinary, for he promises recovery upon the anointing.

C. No such matter, it is upon the prayer of faith, that he promises recovery, he also promisseth forgivenesse, and since you pray by all, and do not say that it is more then a mean for their being raised up and forgiven; why do you not as well anoint, since the Scripture commands it? But all this shews, that however, with women, and simple people, you talk much of your sticking to the Word, and by your grave nods, and big words would perswade them, that it is so; yet you are as far from it as any. I shall end all this with an instance of great importance, who taught you the change of the Sabbath? I am far from speaking against the Church that did so, but you will read the Bible long ere you finde it there, that of their meeting on the first day of the week, sayeth not, that they antiquated the Saturday, that of the Lords day, saith yet lesse for it.

N. Well, what make you of all this? it may well prove, our Church was not perfect; it never justifies you. Or, do you mean to lay aside the Scriptures?

C. It once checks your insolence, who pretend so big, upon so light grounds; and it is certainly a directer opposition to Scripture, to neglect what is expressly enjoined, as you do, than to add in some lesser matters. All I say upon the whole matter, is, that the Scriptures were designed by God, for the purifying the hearts and conversations of men; and therefore it was not necessarie they should contain direct rules; for the Church-policy, which being a half civil matter, needs not divine warrands; and therefore the common rules are in Scripture, that there should be Church Officers, that those should be separate for that Function, that they should be obeyed, that things should be done to order, edification, and peace. These are everlasting obligations, because the reasons of them are perpetual: But the other rules were accommodat to the then state of things; which altering, they alter likewise. And this is so rational, that I can see nothing to be excepted against it, with any shew or colour of reason. Nay, this looks like the Christian liberty, for, whereas the old dispensation was bound up, and limited to the smallest matters, *Christ hath delivered us from that law of Ordinances, and hath made us free.*

N. This is to take the Crown off Christs head, and to pull him off his Throne, and to deny him King,

King, which was the good confession he witnessed before *Pilate*, and for which he came into the world; this also makes him unfaithful, and inferior to *Moses*.

C. There are fine devices to terrifie simple people, and with such talk you triumph among women, and in your Conventicles. But, how little reason will suffice to let a man see through that canting? I say then, Christs Crown, his Throne, and Kingdom, is an inward and spiritual one, and not of the world, nor as the Kingdoms of the world: And a great part of his Kingdom, is, the liberty whereto he hath called us, freeing us from the yoke of the former slavery and pedagogy. And since no Allegory holds, it is ridiculous to argue, because offices in a Kingdom are named by the King, therefore it must be so in the Church; since you may as well say, there must be coin stamped by Christ. Beside, what King will think his prerogative lessened, by constituting a Corporation, to whom he shall leave a liberty to cast themselves into what mould they please, providing they obey the general lawes, and hold that liberty as a thing depending upon him? Christs faithfulness consisted in his discharging the Commission given him by the Father; of which, whosoever doubts, let him be *Anathema Maranatha*. But, who told you, it was in the Fathers Commission? If you argue from *Moses*, it will say more than you will grant, that all particulars must be determined: since then, as *Moses* determines the dayes of separation for a legal uncleanness, why doth

doth not the Gospel determine the separation for spiritual uncleanness? Nay further, consider *Moses* instituted no Church-Government, in the way we use it; for that of the Tribe of *Levi*, and house of *Aaron*, was only Typical, and to wait on the Temple, and the Worship to be performed there. Beside which, they had Synagogues all the Land over, and wherever they had Colonies in the World, and in these they had their Rabbies, their Scribes, and their Rulers, and their chief Ruler of their Synagogues, which read their Law, performed such Worship as was not tyed to the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and they inflicted Discipline upon offenders: and these might have been of any Tribe, not only of that of *Levi*; and yet our Saviour never challengeth this, but went in to the rulers of their Synagogues; the like you finde done by his Apostles, and they never declame against it, as an humane invention. Whence it must follow, that you must grant, either what they did, was founded on divine tradition (which no Christian will grant) or that a form of Government was devised by men, and yet no unlawful thing. And if the Jews had such liberty, certainly the Christian Church is at least more free, as to these externals. And after all, since Christ is the Head of the World, as well as of the Church, why did not he determine the order of the one, as well as of the other?

N. The odds is very great, for his Church is dearer to him than all the world.

C. Why then doth he not determine how his Church

Church should be governed, as to the civil matter, since Justice is a part of his Law, as well as devotion? and the civil peace, I hope, you will grant, is more necessary to the very being of the Church, than is order in Discipline; and so it was determined in the old Law, but yet it is left at liberty in the new. And though I should grant, the Church, as Church, is dearer to Christ, than as they are men, a foolish and childish nicety: Yet a King, though he looks most to what is dearest to him, he will have his authority acknowledged in all his dominions: whence it will, with the same parity of reason follow, that since Christ is the King of the earth, there should be no Offices in it, but of his appointment.

N. I never loved this carnal reason, it is an enemy to Religion: Our Ministers bring us to the Bible for every thing they say, but you come on with your reason.

C. Truly you have good cause to be against reason, for it and you cannot both prevail. If by carnal reason, you mean a sober examining things, by the dictates of Nature; see that you condemn not that, which is indeed the voice of God in us, and therefor is to be received. And if you make this contrary to Religion, you bring as great a stain upon Religion, as an Atheist could devise: But if by reason, you mean little pitiful nibbling with some ill understood, and worse applied distinctions, out of *Aristotle* and *Ramus*, as is very frequent among you, that is justly called vain Philosophy. And for Scripture, do not think they build

build surest upon it, who are ever quoting it fastest; the Devil did that, and so do all Sects. And thus if you can rightly weigh things, I have said enough to convince you, that in matters of Government, the Church is at liberty: But if you will still go to Scripture, I can positively say, though in it nothing amounts to a demonstration; There are fairer likelihoods for Bishops, from that of the *Angels of the Churches*, than ever you shall find in it for Presbytery: but I will not say more of this. Next, let me tell you how soon this Government was in the Church.

N. I will not deny, tares sprung very early in Gods Husbandry, but that will never convince me. *To the Law, and to the Testimony; for from the beginning it was not so.*

C. You do well to possess your self with a prejudice against these Churches; but think soberly, whether is it likelier, that those who lived so nigh the sacred time, understood the mind of the Apostles better then we do, at the fagg end of an thousand and six hundred years? As also, whether is it liker, that the Church then, alwayes in the fire of persecution, was purer then she is now? God bless me from the pride of comparing my self with these worthies, who were honoured to convert the world, and to die for the truth?

N. But Bishops were not in the two first Centuries, as our Ministers say.

C. They are grossly ignorant, or disingenuous, who say so, all History being against them: *Ignatius*

ius Epistles are plain Language. And in Cyprian's time it is undenied, that their power was then well regulate and settled. But, I believe, few of you know these Writings. In the Council of Nice, speaking of the power of Metropolitans, which was an additional thing to that of Bishops over Presbyters: The Canon sayes, *Let the ancient Customs be in force.* Now, how this exceeding power should have crept into the whole Church, and no mention when it came in, no temporal Princes, nor universal Councils to introduce it, and that at a time of persecution, when the Church was least to be suspected of pride, no Secular consideration being to flatter this power; nay, on the contrary, they alwayes bore the first brunt of the Persecution; and how none opposed it, if this was not introduced by Apostles, or Apostolical men, passeth my divination.

N. But these Bishops were not such as ours are.

C. I confess they were better men, than either Bishops, or Presbyters alive are: But he knows little Church-story, who knows not, that the Presbyters did nothing without them, and that particularly, Presbyters could never ordain without a Bishop.

N. Well then, as it was good then, so it may be ill now, and there is our present case.

C. I say still, it is a rational, just, and a most necessary thing, that the Senior, and most approved Church-men, be peculiarly incharged, as well with

with the trial of Intrants, as with the inspection of the Clergy: since no order of men needs so much to be regulated, as that of Church-men. And therefore unless they be all equal in gifts, and parts, they ought not to be equal in power and authority. If the power of Bishops be at any time abused, it is but that to which all humane things are liable: nor can Presbytery be freed of that; but let the common maxime in such cases be applied to this, *remove the abuse, but retain the use.*

But these Bishops were not such as ours
 Theological men, rather my divination.
 if this was not introduced by Apollonius, or A-
 ment of the Institution; and how none opposed
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 and the many the Councils of Rome, Lyons,

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Well then, as it was good then, it is may
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VI. **DIAL. IV.**

DIALOGUE IV.

N **Y**OU have said, I confess, a great many things, that I cannot well answer; yet my conscience still tells me, that Episcopacy is no good Government; and I cannot act against my Conscience.

C. You must remember, this is the Plea of all Hereticks, who still pretend Conscience. I confess there is nothing in the world, wherein I desire to be more tender, than in offering the least violence to Conscience, there not being a wider step to Atheism, than to do any thing against the conviction of Conscience. But see it be not humour, and wilfulness, that you scorn to change your opinion, or love to your party: whom you dare not displease: or vanity, that you may be noticed; or faction; Or simple and blind following of your Leaders, without clear convictions in your own mind; all which, for most part, are the true reasons of schisms, though Conscience be ever pretended. And remember, that *God will not hold them guiltless, that take his Name in vain*, so you shall not pass unpunished, if you pretend Conscience, and be not acted by it.

N. How then must I examine any perswasion, to know if it be conscience, or not?

C. If you find in your heart a serious desire to please God in all things, together with a desire of obeying the Laws of the Kingdom, and of complying

plying with the Church, in what you judge lawful, but out of grounds which appear to you founded upon the will of God, you are led to a persuasion, this is Conscience: provided there be joined with it, a modest distrust of your self, with a charitable opinion of those that differ from you. And such as are of this temper, were their judgements never so blemished, I reverence, and love: Weigh the matter therefore in just scales, and I doubt you shall see, that at best, you are led by a blind and implicate obedience, for I will not uncharitably censure you as guilty of worse.

N. You are so proudly blown up, with an opinion of your self, that you think all who are not of your mind, are blind and ignorant at best: whether is not this arrogance in you?

C. Consider my grounds, ere you give a judgement against me. I say then, private persons have nothing to do with matters of Government; your business is, to submit in these things, and not to judge: For, whether think you, God in the great day, will call you to answer at his Tribunal, if you were Episcopal, or Presbyterian? As also, since the great design of the Gospel is, to purify the heart; these things which have no tendency to the purifying, or blotting of the Soul, are not matters of Conscience: And these are two easie Rules, whereby private persons might well examine their Consciences.

N. But if we think you are wrong, can we joyn with you?

C. First, I say, you can have no rational ground

to

to think us wrong, in matters of Religion: And since it is not a matter of Religion, and Salvation, you cannot without being Schismatical, separate from us. But further, even every error in Religion, ought not to untie the bond of the unity of the Catholick Church, unless the error be of greater importance, than the Communion of Saints is: a consideration which you never seem to weigh. How did the Apostle St. Paul become a Jew to the Jews? though he tells us to do these things, out of an opinion of necessity in them, was to antiquate the crosse of Christ. And let all men judge, whether to circumcise, and purify in the Temple, were not greater compliances, in matters more justly to be scrupled, than what we contend about. Nay, the free spirit of Christianity, made St. Paul see well that these externals were of themselves nothing; so that either doing, or forbearing in them, might be acceptable to God; as he clearly sheweth in his fourteenth Chapter to the Romans. Yea, he carrieth this liberty further, even to an instance, which I confess, I should never have yeelded to, had not he determined in it; that is, the eating in the Idols Temples, of their feasts, and eating meat offered to Idols. Now, if St. Paul did this freely, both to Jew and Gentile, are not you bound to more obedience, when not only charity, but duty to the Laws exact it? This sheweth how far you are, both from the free and charitable spirit of St. Paul.

N. It is true, he complied in these things,

E

but

but it was freely, and not when it was exacted, as you do of us. Next, he avoided to do these things, when they occasioned scandal, which is our case.

C. You in this bewray great simplicity; for St. Paul did not refuse compliance, because they were commanded by authority, which you do: but because certain false brethren came to *spy out his liberty*, to whom he gave place by subjection, *no not for an hour*. If therefore any require your compliance, as if it were necessary of it self, you have reason to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free*. But it is unsufferable peevishness, to say, if the Magistrate enjoyn a thing, declaring that it is still free in it self, and only necessary, because it is commanded, upon that score, to refuse obedience. And may not offenders as well refuse to undergo the Discipline you enjoyn them, and say, though the thing be lawful, yet it is but indifferent, and therefore they cannot obey you, because you command things indifferent, which, as you reason, makes them necessary. As for the point of scandal, do not mistake it, as if the displeasing your party, were a giving of scandal, as many of you weakly think; to give scandal then, is, to stretch your liberty, when that freedom of yours, may draw others to follow your practice, though they have not the same clearness in their mind. And hence it appears, that to avoid scandal, is only an *abridging your liberty*, for the good of your brother. If therefore you be not at liberty, but already restrained in it by the lawful command

of authority ; you ought not in that case to be disobedient ; upon a pretence of avoiding scandal. But I shall yet examine the matter of conformity, more closely. And, first, why do not your Ministers join with our Courts for Church-discipline ?

N. They cannot do it , because they are no Legal Courts, the Law that established them being taken away, so that now they are but the Bishops Deputies.

C. I have before studied to convince you, that all that is divine in Discipline, is , that scandalous persons be noted, and separated from worship ; but how this shall be administered, can be no matter of Religion ; since, wherein are souls concerned ; whether a Court, acting in a parity, or with one over them, do this ; providing it be done ? But waving this, whether judge you the Presbyters power for Discipline is founded upon a Divine Law, or upon the Act of Parliament ? no doubt, you will say, the first : well then, can the abolishing that Act of Parliament take away your power ? if not, you ought to sit in these Courts, and still do your duty.

N. But this is to sit in a Bishops Court, which acknowledgeth his authority.

C. I pray you, suppose the case, that the King should abrogate all Laws for the worship of God, and declare, that all that assemble to worship God, shall be understood to worship Mahomet, and thereupon oblige all to meet ; though you meet not upon that command, yet I hope you



will still meet to worship God; -let them interpret that as they please. So, I say, since a power of Jurisdiction, is that to which Presbyters lay claim, by a divine right, they ought to meet in these Courts, let the Law call it what it will.

N. But the Bishop is over them, and overruleth them as he pleaseth.

C. But, suppose this were true, and that Episcopacy is a tyranny in the Church; Why ought you not to submit to them, as well as you did to the late Tyrants in the State? And why, as your Ministers say, they will be content to take Churches, and preach, but let Discipline alone; which is a quitting of some of their Rights, that they may retain the greater? May they not as well exercise Discipline, though they cannot do it with all the liberty they desire? Sure, there is nothing but preevishness in this.

N. Do you think our Ministers would quit their Churches, and liberty of Preaching the Gospel, which is dearer to them than all the world, for any thing but Conscience?

C. I am not so severe as to doubt, but in most of them it is Conscience; but I must add it is ill informed Conscience. But what can you pretend, for your peoples withdrawing from our Churches? since our Religion, in Doctrine, Worship and Discipline, is the same: only a small alteration in the point of Government is made.

N. I am not for separating from you, as my practice tells, but much may be said for it: therefore I will judge none that do it.

C. True

C. Truly I desire to be as sparing in passing Judgements on people, as any can be : but since separation must be either a necessary duty, or a very great sin, being a forsaking the unity of the Church : it can be no light matter to tear the Body of Christ, when there is scarce a colour of pretence for it. Now, the Schismatical humour among you, appears palpably in this, that you come sometimes to Church, but seldom ; this seems indeed to be time-serving, that you may both evite the punishment of the Law, and also retain your interest with your party ; for, if you come once in three moneths, you may come every Lords day ; and if you may come, you ought to come ; otherwise you forsake the assemblings of the Saints, and contemn what you call the Ordinances. Others of you also joyn with some of us, but not with others. Now as to our publick transgressions (if they be such) we are all equally guilty, why then make you a difference ? Others of you come to Churches in the Countrey, but do not so in the City : what doth this look like, but that you have freedom for the thing, but will not do it, for fear of being noticed ? which is to prefer the pleasing of men, to the pleasing of God. And finally, some of you joyn with us in the ordinary Worship, but will not communicat with us, which bewrayes great folly ; for if you may pray and praise with us, which is the spiritual communicating : why do you not joyn in the Eucharist, which is but solemne praise ?

N. How can we acknowledg them our Pastors, who are intruders, and are in the places of our faithful shepherds, whom you have torn from us?

C. Supposing it were as you assert, yet that will never warrand your separating from them: since, although by the Law of *Moses*, the eldest of the house of *Aaron* was high Priest; and the *Romanes* by force driving them from their right, exposed this most sacred function to sale, so that the high Priests not only invaded the right of others, but also obtained their office by the most horrid *Simony* imaginable; yet *Caiaphas*, as high Priest, prophesied; Our Saviour also answered at his Bar, and gave confession, when he authoritatively adured him, *in the Name of the living God*. *St. Paul* also acknowledged *Annanias*. And though the Pharisees were wretched teachers, guilty both of greater crimes and heresies, than you dare charge on us; Yet our Saviour saith, *bear them, for they sit in Moses Chair*. This is so convincing, that nothing in reason can be alledged against it: Yes, it was the doctrine of your own Teachers. Finally, what cruelty is it, if a Minister be put from his place, be it justly or unjustly, that the people should be starved? It shews your Ministers can have no love to their flocks, if they desire it should be so.

N. But your Curats are naughty men and weak preachers.

C. This is an excellent piece of Religion in you, to take up, and use reproachful names of your Pastors. For though the name *Curat*, be a defig-

a designation, no Minister ought to be ashamed
 of; it signifying one that hath the care of Souls;
 yet ye use it as a term of contempt: and this is
 your obedience to St. Paul's rule, honour them
 that are over you in the Lord: Which, as he
 adds, is for their works sake, and not for their
 persons sake, as you do. As for their persons
 and Gifts, where is Christian charity, that should
 make you slow to take up a bad impression upon
 slight grounds? But if your grounds be good,
 where is your charity to the Church? since you
 do not make it known, that they may be cast
 out. Beside, it will open a very wide door to
 separation, if you say, that upon the personal fail-
 ings, much more weaknesse of a Preacher, you
 may separate. This is to ty the good of Church
 Worship to him that mannageth it. And fur-
 ther, it seems, you think to hear Sermon, all you
 go to Church for: But the chief reason of our
 meeting, is solemnly to acknowledge God, and
 that we are members of his Church: which we
 can do, be the Minister what he will; and hear
 good Scriptures read, and sing good Psalms. Be-
 sides, let me tell you, you are not so zealous for
 good Preachings, as you would make the world
 believe. For, are there not many of your Preach-
 ers, who, while they were in place, were of no
 esteem, nor following; and are undoubtedly men
 of weak Gifts, yet now are crouded to by you?
 and the Church Sermons are deserted, and their
 Conventicles frequented. All the reason for this
 is, because they rail against the Church and State;
 which

which is the only way to make a man popular amongst you.

N. You have pretended to answer a great many things, but one thing remains, wherein our chief strength lieth, and that you shall never be able to unbind; which is, the Covenant: wherein the whole Nation, and the generations to come in their loins are engaged; and, can such sacred and solemn vows be broken, without shameful perjury?

C. This you alwayes bring out as your *Goliath*, to defy the Armies of the living God. But as *Sampson's* strength lay in his hair, without which he was as other men; so upon a full survey, it appears that the Covenants strength consisted in the Armies that fought for it, and not in any inward or innate vigour. And, first, what a ridiculous fancy is it, to say, Children can be bound by their fathers Oath? is not this to make us the servants of men, and to give them authority over our consciences; which is Gods peculiar power? Alas, what kind of souls have you, that can be led into such conceits!

N. Doth not the fathers debt oblige the son? why not also his oath?

C. A mans debt affects his estate, which if the son get, he is bound to pay the debt. But if the son get no estate by his father, then I hope you will not say he is bound to pay his fathers debt. And this shews that the fathers promises binde nothing upon the sons conscience.

N. But are not we bound to duty to the King, because

because of the Allegiance our fathers swore, even though we never swear it our selves?

C. Not at all, because they swore Allegiance, but because the right of the Crown is in the Kings person, and therefore we are born his Subjects.

N. But how was *Adam* obliged for his Posterity, if Parents cannot binde their children?

C. This is strange dealing, to apply a myserie of our faith, which we cannot well comprehend, to your trifling matters. But take notice, that *Adam* did not binde his children, by his undertaking for them, but by a secret transaction of Gods; who covenanted with him, as with the common head of mankind. And if Parents can bind duties upon their children, they may as well bind sins upon them. And this is new Doctrine unheard-of in the Church, which never acknowledged any Original sin, but that deriyed from *Adam*.

N. How then do Parents vow for their children in Baptism? and are not they bound by the Baptismal vow, taken by the father, in their name?

C. The Parent binds for the childe, as a tutor in legal matters for his Pupil: that is, they bind for their interest. The childe is indeed eyed by his Baptism, not as it was his fathers vow, but because by the command of God, he was Baptized into the likenesse of Christ.

N. How then is *Saul* charged, and his children punished for killing the *Gibeonites*?

C. It

C. It was not because he had falsified the oath, the Princes swore : which is no where said. But these *Gibeonites*, by that oath, got a right to their lives ; and so were excepted, when God ratified it, from the general command of cutting off the *Canaanites* : therefore, to kill them, was cruelty, and not perfidy. And *Saul* is not taxed of perjury, but of blood. For although the second of *Samuel* make mention of the oath sworn to them, that is, only to reminde the Reader of the History set down in *Joshuah* : but doth not at all say, the oath was still binding, as appears from the words. Thus I have taken more pains than was needful, to shew the ridiculous fondnesse of this absurd notion : and have met with all can be said for it.

N. Well, for all this, ye cannot deny but the Covenant binds these who took it.

C. I will, ere I come to that, let you see how little noise you made in the breaking it in some things. When then the Tyrant had murdered the King, enslaved this Nation, antiquated the Covenant, discharged General Assemblies, inhibited praying any more for the King, who then stood up for the Covenant ; or clamoured, as you now do, of Apostacy, Tyranny, and Perjury ? I know, a few spoke somewhat, but it was so seldom, so faintly, and so disguisedly, that it was far from the thundering that was in some of your Pulpits before you were silenced, and as at this day is in your Conventicles. The true reason was, ye knew the Tyrant would make no bones of making

king heads fly, or sending you in Shipfuls to Barbadoes : but you presume upon the King's clemency. And you know what a trip some made, when upon a threatning of taking their Stipends from them, they passed from what, in a printed Paper, they had owned as their duty, both from Scripture and their Covenant.

N. It is uncharitably done of you, to rake in to these things : but if we were faulty in some particulars, that is ill corrected, by becoming so gross, as to renounce all.

C. I meddle with none of your private escapes, but such as were publick : and do it not, as I have often said, to reflect upon you ; but to let you see, you are but as other men, and not such wonders, as you would have the world believe. I shall next tell you, what monstrous faults you committed in exacting the Oath, not returning upon what was hinted, *Dial. 1.* That it was a Bond of Rebellion, against the Lords Anointed. As for your National Covenant, what a cruel imposing upon Consciences was it, to make a Nation swear an Oath, which they could not understand ? For you made them therein renounce all the Articles of Popery ; amongst the rest, *opus operatum*, a Latine word, and abstruse conceit ; with many other niceties, which you could not but know, your women and simple people did not understand. And was it not a contradiction, to make them swear against Worship in an unknown Tongue ; and yet in that very Oath so to use it ? For swearing is an act of Worship.

Yes,

Yea, you made them preface all this with a great lye, that it was *after full and mature consideration of all particulars*; when you knew they were not capable of considering them. And what strange Tyranny over Consciences was it, to make people swear in these matters, some whereof might be disputable; so that a man could not be of your communion, except he were in your opinion in all things? A rigour never before practised but in Trent. Then, what a trepane was it, to make the Nation swear the Covenant, and by an after-game to declare that Episcopacy was abjured in it? Next, what violence used you to oblige all to bow to this Idol? Church-men were not only deposed, who refused it; but both Church-men and Lay-men were excommunicated, if they did not submit to your tyranny. What man of common sense can think this was the Cause of God, which had such monstrous errors in its first conception?

N. All you can say upon this head, may well prove, there were some faults in imposing it; but it still doth bind, since he *shall dwell in Gods holy hill, who swears to his own hurt, and changeth not*.

C. I confess, Oaths, when the matter is lawfull, do oblige: but if the nature of things change, so the matter grow unlawful, you then cannot say the Oath binds. In a word, a man, or a Society can only bind themselves, in things that are left to their power, and are in their own liberty.

erty : but if the matter be not in their power, then their Oath cannot bind them.

N. That is not our case, since you acknowledge the thing to be of it self indifferent.

C. I confess, if you take the thing abstractly in it self, it is indifferent : but as the case now stands, it is not so : for, by the command of God, we are obliged to obey the Magistrate in all things lawful : so that all just Laws oblige our Consciences : And this is a tye before all Oaths. And as by no act of ours, we can be bound to break the commands of God ; so, no more can we oblige our selves to do any thing in prejudice of anothers right ; such as is the Sovereign's Authority. Therefore, no Covenant can bind us to deny obedience to the King's Laws, because they are in a measure, the Laws of God ; and it is his right to command us, from which, no Act of ours can exclude him. Therefore, since the King and Parliament have annulled the Covenant, and required us to submit to Episcopacy, it can no more bind us.

N. This is good Doctrine, to teach that we should obey man, rather than God.

C. This is gross ignorance in you, it is, that we should obey God rather than our selves : for, the just Laws, are the mediate commands of God ; whereas our Oaths were a voluntary deed of our own, to which we were not bound by any command of God. Now, if you comprehend not this clear demonstration, it is because you are a stranger to common sense.

N. Wherein

N. Wherein could Episcopacy have been more for the good of Scotland? or what could the Kings reason be, for preferring it to Presbytery, at least for judging it fitter for us?

G. This is like all mutinous Subjects, to be judging and censuring the actions of their Princes, untill they be on all their secrets, and know what all their reasons, and designs are. God hath given Kings the authority to command, and hath left us the glory of obedience; which we ought to do without further inquiry: provided what they enjoyn be against no command of God. But we need not seek to rattle the Cabinets of the King, and his Councillors, there being many apparent cogent reasons, to have enforced the change. You know what work your Leaders occasioned, both to his Royal Grandfather, and Father, and to Himself. You had involved the Nations in blood; and not satisfied with this, after you got all the security you could demand, you engaged with his enemies in England, against him; you opposed the design of delivering his Father, *Anno* 1648. In a word, what jealousies had you justly raised in the hearts of Princes, of your Government? and your Tyranny (1649.) against the Nobility, had justly irritated them against you. Next, you had divided shamefully amongst your selves, one great party amongst you, being such, that your selves found it necessary to turn them out; their maxims being inconsistent with all Order and Government. And of these that are outed, it

is

is clear, that more than three parts of four, are of that party. Why then are ye so blind as to ask a reason for the change was made, as if at noon one should ask where were the Sun?

N. Sure you are an enemy to Godlineffe, who have an heart so to rail at us.

C. I am such a lover of true piety, that for all this droffe that is amongst you, such of you, as live well, and walk conscientiously, I still love and value; and the Searcher of hearts knoweth, that I daily pray he may finde a way to re-unite us all again; and to bring such of your Leaders, as are sensible of their errours, in these great escapes, to a capacity of serving him in the Church. But it is strange you should take such a liberty, both in Discourses, Conventicles, and printed Writings, or rather Libells, to inveigh against us; and then, if we but say a little for justifying the King, the Lawes, and our Consciences, and for undeceiving the people of these mists you would cast over their eyes, then you cry out, that we are uncharitable, bitter and malicious. Sure you who are so much for defensive arms, may, at least, allow us to defend the truth, the law, and our selves, with our Tongues and Pens.

DIALOGUE V.

N. I Confesse you have much shaken me in the matter of the Bishops, though I never find in my heart to love them. But one thing still sticks, they are great friends to the Common-Prayer-Book, which I cannot think upon in patience; and therefore I cannot joyn with them.

C. Truly if that be your chief quarrel against them, it is as well grounded as the rest.

N. How! do not you think it a great matter, to take from us the pure and spiritual Worship of God, and in stead thereof, set up a dead and formal Liturgy?

C. I perceive you are still abused after one manner, your Leaders put big words in your mouthes to make you stick stiffly by them; your Government, they taught you to account the interest and Kingdom of Christ; they also would make you believe your Worship to be the only spiritual one, and all others but carnal. Now, I will let you see the great fallacy of this praying by the Spirit, as you understand it. To pray by the Spirit, is, when out of a deep sense of our misery and need, and firm confidence in God, we draw near to him, to offer up our prayers, and praises to him, through Jesus Christ. Our hearts being moulded in this frame, we pray by the Spirit; use we words, or not, the same, or different expressions. Nay, it will appear, we

are carnal, when we need to have our devotion tickled, and provoked with new words.

N. Now, I clearly see the rottenneſſe of your heart, and your ſuperſtitious cold formality.

C. This is great arrogance for you thus to judge of things ye underſtand not. Conſider then, the Will is the ſupream power of the Soul, and the fancy is a lower faculty; the true and ſpiritual devotion therefore, muſt be that which lies in the Will, and not in the Fancy: now, the varying of one thing into ſeveral ſhapes, is only a gratifying of Fancy: and all the devotion can be raiſed by ſuch Chimes, is only ſenſible, whereas one of a deep and ſtedfaſt ſpirit, is equally affected with a thing, though ſtill in the ſame dreſs. Since then, for inſtance, our petition for pardon of ſin, is fully comprized in this, *have mercy upon me, O God*, doth it not ſhew, that the thing, and not the words, affect him, who with the newneſſe of affection, can make that prayer, though an hundred times repeated, at every return, new? whereas he muſt have a lower minde, who needs a new phraſe to renew his ſavour. And thus you ſee, it expreſſeth a more ſpiritual temper, to be able to worſhip God in ſimple and conſtant forms.

N. I never thought to have heard the *Liturgy* and *Worſhip* called *ſpiritual*, and the *conceived* one, *carnal*. You that are Schollers make any thing of any thing with your Logick, but you will never make me think but our Miniſters prayed by the Spirit.

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C. It needs but a very little knowledge of our selves, and none of Logick, to make you comprehend this: for, do you think, the heating of the fancy cannot make wicked men pray without the Spirit, as to appearance very spiritually? Finally, words, and all the heat begot by words, gesture, voice, or phrases, or the like, are but a false fire in the natural powers of the Soul, which may well heat the brain, draw forth tears, seem to wring the heart; and all this, is but a sensible fervour, which (as the temper raised by musick) amounts to nothing, but to a present tickling; whereas the true devotion of the heart, is, an inward, still, humbling and melting thing, and so equable, that it is above these frisking fits of the fancy. And it is certain, to pray by the Spirit, must be the immediat work of the Spirit of Graces: Since then we see, that the praying in words, depends most upon Memory, Fancy, Eloquence, Confidence and Custome; he that abounds in these, is like to excel in it; whereas one, defective in all these, so that he cannot pray in a variety of words, yet may understand interior prayer and spiritual converse with God, better than any other.

N. This is new doctrine to me. And I cannot understand nor believe it.

C. Consider then, that the sublimest way of prayer, is in the simplest acts: such as these; *thought my God, and I am thine.* And in such breathings, a devout mind will persist long, with great sweetnesse: and in this, God hath strangely

adapt Religion; so that the highest strain of it, is, what the simplest minde can most easily reach. Nay, perhaps multiplicity doth lead out the minde from pure and still devotion. And thus extemporary prayer, cannot be called praying by the Spirit; except by spirit you understand the animal or natural spirits: for, if it be by the Spirit, it must be infallible; since all that is dictated by the Spirit of God is so: yet your people do not asse their prayers as such. Further, let one with a short-hand, follow that mans prayer, who you say prays by the Spirit; then, may not that prayer be read and used over again? or, is the Spirit in the prayer so volatile, that it evaporates in the saying, and the prayer becomes carnal when it is repeated? Finally, if praying by the Spirit, be a praying in new words, then only he that conceives the prayer, prays by the Spirit: since they who hear and joyne with him, are tyed to his words.

IV. The words were dictated by the Spirit to him that conceives them.

G. Then to the people it is not necessary, the words be new: since to them it is all one, if it were once dictated by the Spirit. But why do you not believe the prayer composed by the Church, to be of the Spirits dictating, as well as that of your Ministers? And, since the people can joyne and pray by the Spirit, though the words be not of their framing; why may not the Minister pray in the Spirit, though he use words framed by others? All this shows how weak and ill grounded the

notion; that of praying by the Spirit, in the sense you understand it, is. And it clearly appears, that the dresse of the prayer in words, and the life begot by them, is but sensible and low.

N. But doth not the Spirit help our infirmities, and teach us to pray?

C. If you consider the words aright, they speak out a thing very far different from what you would draw from them. The Spirit teacheth us to pray, for what we ought, that is the matter of our prayers; and as we ought, that is the manner, to wit, the temper of our hearts. For, that words are not meant, appears from what follows, and maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered: or literally, which cannot be worded.

N. But though the renewing of words were a lower way of devotion; yet, we in this inbodied state, need to have our souls stirred up by the commotion of our fancies.

C. Then at least, this must convince you, that such a way of praying, is not so sublime, and therefore ought not to be called praying by the Spirit. And you must acknowledge, such as can worship God devoutly in a set Form, to be of a higher size as being above these gratifications of nature and fancy. I will next convince you of the evil of extemporary forms. In such then, I must long exercise my attention to consider what he who prays, intends; that I may judge, whether I can joyne with him or not: Now this strangely draweth out the minde from devotion: for, two

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he powers of the Soul cannot be vigourously acted at one time. The attention therefore must put great stops to the progresse of the devotion: and the mind being so prone to wander in Worship; this opens a wide door to it. But he who knoweth already what the prayer is, runs along in his devotion, without anxiety, or wavering. Hence I have heard devout men say, they were ever much troubled, while they joyned in extemporary Worship, to keep their minde from distraction; which they found wholly remedied, when they were where God was worshipped in set Forms.

N. What sort of devout men could these be? sure they knew not what devotion meant.

C. This is like all weak people, to censure what is above them, and they do not understand. But judge whether it be fit, I blindly join with one in the worship of God, when I know not how he is to manage it: and you cannot deny, some may pray things you dare not join in. Shall I not trust a man in any matter, without understanding how he will discharge it? only in my devotions to God I will blindly trust for great a concernment, as one who saith he doth not know how he will manage it himself. It is not enough to say, you join not in these things to which you cannot say Amen; for, at least to others you seem so to do. And this will keep you still in some anxiety, when in your heart you may say Amen, and when not: and indeed this way of praying, was the best could have been devised,

for spreading of error, or sedition: for Ministers prayed over their Sermons; so that what in the discourse seemed the words of man, in the prayer was called the dictate of the Spirit. And this was an excellent device, to make all go down, had it been of the worst stuff.

N. All things may be abused, but by your own rule, this should not strike against their use.

C. Things of themselves good, falling into a abuse, ought not for that to be taken away; except the abuse be greater than the goodness of the thing: but, if a thing, not of it self good, be grossly abused, then there is ground to change the use of it. Now, since we speak of abuses, I might run out in a long career, and tell of the tedious length, the scurrilous expressions, the involved periods, the petulant and wanton assertions, and other great abuses in extemporary prayers with which, no doubt, you your self hath been often much troubled; but I bear that tender respect to every thing that hath any relation to Gods service, that I love not to scoff at any thing looks that way: But you know these are sad truths. Whether then, it is not necessary you redress these abuses by a regular form?

A. You know we had a Directory of the things we should pray for.

C. And why may not you have a Directory for words, as well as things? since the Spirit rather helps in things than in words. But it was that you brought up that Directory merely to constrain the world; which otherwise might have been

startled, to have seen you without all form, or rule for Worship: for, even your Leaders quickly wearied of it, and regarded it not. And one thing clearly followed, that the Preaching was the great matter of the Worship: all the Prayers and Psalms relating to it. But the constant acts, wherein the Church should adore God, were thought too homely. To conclude, the least evil of extemporary forms, is, that a Minister is ready to pour out his soul to God, in such devotions as are then most in his own spirit: Suppose he be mourning for sin, under affliction, rejoicing in God, or the like; he is apt to pray in these strains. But these being his private exercises, are not fit for publick Worship, which, as it ought to be grave and solemn; so, it should be general and comprehensive.

N. I see you are for set-forms: but what reason have you for them? Sure the Apostles used them not.

C. You are not so sure as you imagine, for I cannot doubt but they used our Saviours Prayer, he taught them; for whereas, at first, in his Sermon on the Mount, he had given it as a pattern of Prayer, they afterwards, as is clear by the series of the Gospel, came and asked a form of him, as St. John had given his Disciples: and then he doth not say, as he formerly said, *After this manner pray*, but *when you pray*, which clearly sheweth, he intended it as a practice, as well as a pattern. Nay further, the Jews at that time had a Liturgy, and their hours of Prayer, which

which our Saviour never reproveth, as a formal thing: but, on the contrary, he takes his Prayer, word for word, out of it, as may be seen, if you will read their Liturgy. And this shews how foolish that exception against the Liturgy of England is, that some of its prayers are translated out of the Roman Missal or Breviary. But though the Apostles and persons immediately inspired, might pour out extemporary prayers, thence it will not follow, that every one may assume the same liberty. Beside, you see by the Worship of the *Corinthians*, they used Hymnes of their composing, as well as Prayers; Now I could never comprehend why you will allow the Spirit to be restrained in praising, as to words, and not in praying, since both are duties equally spiritual; nay, perhaps praising, is the most sublime of the two.

N. Because the Psalms are a collection of praises dictated by the Spirit of God for Worship.

C. This is all you can say upon the matter, but never were more absurdities crouded in less bounds. And first, it is clear, we may worship in the Spirit, and yet be restrained as to words; since you acknowledge God hath done it in praising. Next, the Psalms are full of acts that are prayers, as well as thanksgivings; why may we not use these for constant prayers, as well as the other for constant praises? Nay, since we use to sing these prayers, why may we not for instance use the 51. Psalm, in plain words, with a plain voice,

voice, as prayer, as well as in hobling ryme, with a Tune? Sure you will find no difference in this, since you cannot say we are bound to use the Psalms in Meeter, or with Tunes: for nothing proves we ought to use them with vocal Tunes, but will conclude as strongly for all *David's* Instruments. Besides, who told you that all *David's* Psalms were to be constantly used in Worship? It is clear, most of them was not intended for constant use: they relating to particulars of *David's* History and Victories, which belongs not to us. And it is hard to say, we ought to sing his imprecatory Psalms: As also, many things are in the Psalms which we cannot sing, because we do not understand them: And it is clear, we ought to praise God with our understandings; and not above twenty of the Psalms were used by the Jews in Worship. To conclude, why may not the Christian Church compose new Hymns, as they of *Corinth* did? for which they are approved by *St. Paul*. And this is the more necessary, because from *David's* Psalms, we are not furnished with such full and clear Hymns, upon the great Mysteries of the Christian Belief, as were needful. And what kind of reasons can you have, who plead so much for a liberty in Prayer, and yet allow none in making of Hymns? Why then do not ye use the *Glory to the Father*?

N. Because it is not in the Scripture, and, is but a device of men.

C. Who would not be sick with such pitifull folly? Show me a reason why you may make pray-
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ers, and not praises? Beside, are not your Meeter Psalms a device of men? And they recede from the Text, as I can trace it in an hundred places; as much as the Doxology doth from Scripture words. And you understand Musick little, if you do not know that the Psalms in Prose may be sung as well, and as Musically, as they can be in Ryme. Besides, since the Mystery of the S. S. Trinity, is not so clearly in the Old Testament, nor in any Psalm, why may not the Church use an acknowledgement of it, in the end of their singing, as well as in the end of prayer, is ordinarily said, *To the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever?* Such childish weakness makes me sometimes doubt whether your rational faculties be not troubled: since what difference can you pretend betwixt singing and saying? But I will return to Prayer. Consider next, how *Hosea* the Prophet prescribes a form, when he saith, *take with you words, and say, &c.* Our Saviour also prayed thrice, and though the third time was more fervently, yet it was in the same words: which shows, that ser-
 your confect not in a varying of the phrase. Next, it is clear, that in the Church they used forms very early; since in the Council of *Laodicea*, it was decreed, that the same Liturgy of Prayer should be used morning and evening. It is true, there was not an universal Liturgy then agreed to, but Bishops had their several Liturgies: So we have the Liturgies of *St. Basile*, *St. Chrysostome*, and *St. Ambrose*; not to menti-

on those of St. James, and St. Mark, &c. But never were extemporary heats used in the Church; and all the Reformed Churches have their Liturgies; so we had ours at our first Reformation. *Prayers off their Books; God keep us*

N. But we are a purer Church than any of them; and therefore we are not to learn of them.

C. I know you were made believe, that all the world were wondring at you, but this was a cheat upon you, like that of your alledged Prophets; for, I can assure you, there was no such thing true. One thing is strangely inconsequential amongst you, you will not pray in a Liturgy, and yet you always bless the people in that form. Do you think prayer for a blessing, is not a prayer? Or do you think, the spirit is blunted when the form is short, but only when it is long? Sure these things shew you are not governed by reason. *I know body people who profess*

N. What then conclude you from all this; is it that the English Liturgy be brought in?

C. It is, that you consider better how you ought to worship God. As for the English Liturgy, I do not say any thing is absolutely perfect, but God; yet still I see a better Liturgy compiled, which I never hitherto did, & pardon me I do think it an excellent rule for worship, although your deep, but groundless prejudice against it, have rendered you so incapable of receiving good by it, that such is your Sovereign's Princely tenderness, and your Superiour's discreet

prudence,

prudence, that they do not obtrude on you while you are but babes this stronger food, but are willing to let you be doing with your milk.

N. This is easie way for men to read their Prayers off their Books; God keep us long from it.

C. Truly, if by easiness, you mean what is pleasant to a man, it is far from it; for certainly the natural man would be much better pleased, to be running out with his own conceptions, and to have all the Worship depending upon his lips: this is indeed to be Rabbi. But to use the form of the Church is a more simple, and a more humble way of Worship.

N. I begin to think you can have no piety, who are so in love with that dead and dull Worship.

C. Would to God you and I had more of it than we have: but it is perhaps your stupidity, that makes you dead and dull in it. And I know godly people, who protest, they never in their lives worshipped God with more pure and simple devotion, than when they joined in the English Liturgy-worship: therefore in such matters speak more modestly.

N. But what vain repetitions are in the Liturgy? I have often redoubled they, Lord have mercy upon us.

C. I have not yet asserted, that it is in all things perfect, but truly, I can think that no fault, except you will also quarrel with the Psalms; particularly with the 136. in which is repeated 26. times, for his mercy endureth for ever, it being

in every verse. But in the true sense of vain repetitions, I fear there is ground to say, many of your prayers may be censured for them.

N. But what a confusion is it, that all say some of the prayers together, and use *Amen*?

C. It seems you have read the Scripture well, else you would have found, *Acts 4.* how a whole company there, *lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, &c.* And St. Paul plainly intimates that there was a custome of saying *Amen*, at the giving of thanks. Why then do you not in this follow the express Scripture-rule? And what imaginable ground is there that the people shall all with their voice join in the Psalms, and not also in the Prayers?

N. Well, I see you are zealous for that Service-book, but should you speak till to-morrow, you should never perswade me to join in it: but are you as keen for the Ceremonies?

C. I verily believe, your prejudice against it, though ill grounded, yet is so deep, that no reason will overthrow it: but perhaps, if you saw that worship gravely managed, you should be more reconciled to it. As for the Ceremonies, I will meddle with none, but such as were commanded here, well known by the name of the *five Articles of Perth*. And for these, if you can hear and understand reason, I doubt not to convince you, they were both lawful, and most of them both useful and necessary. I begin with confirmation.

N. Well,

Q. Well, is not this a Popish Sacrament which you would bring into the Church?

A. I confess, if it had been introduced as a Sacrament, you had reason to except against it: but you know no such thing was ascribed to it; and it was only designed for a solemn renovation of the Baptismal Vow. Now, since Children are baptized, and so in Baptism do not ingage for themselves, can any thing be more rational, than that when they come to the years of discretion, they do it themselves? And this Rite was very ancient in the Church, and with great show of reason, the *Laying on of hands* mentioned with Baptism, *Act 6. 6* was expounded of it: and you know most Reformers were for it.

Q. But why must it be done only by a Bishop, as if it were beyond Baptism?

A. That was only to conciliate the more veneration for it, by making it the more solemn: and therefore it hath been generally appropriated to the Bishop. Yet I shall not contend about that, since *St. Ambrose*, or rather *Hilary* faith, that in *Egypt*, the Presbyters in the Bishop's absences did confirm. And *St. Jerome* faith, that a Bishop did nothing, except the Ordination, which a Presbyter did not likewise. The next Article was private Baptism.

Q. This was another piece of Popery, to make the Sacrament necessary to Salvation.

A. It is rather gross Superstition, to confine the Sacramental actions to the walls of a Church; for it is the assembly of the faithful that makes a Church.

Church. Our Saviour said, *Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, I will be in the midst of them.* As for the necessity of the Sacraments, none calls them simply necessary to Salvation; but since they were commanded, they ought to be used, unless some more cogent reason stop the use of them, than is the want of a dedicated House. And who should expect, that they who are so much against reverence to Sacred Houses, should likewise be against private Sacraments? As for Baptism, what a cruel thing is it, to oblige Children; especially when they are tender, to be brought, perhaps in the coldest season, many miles, rather than go and Baptize at their Houses? this looks liker Heathenish barbarity, than the Christian tenderness. And for Communion, why should not sick persons receive on death-bed, when all the reasons of receiving are most strong? Their faith and love needs then to be most quickened; Never is the death of Christ more to be remembered, than when they are to pass through the valley and shadow of death; and never is it more fit, that they declare their Communion with the Church, and their love to the Brethren, than when they are entering upon their last pangs: And it is well known how early a practice this was in the Church of God. *Justin Martyr* tells, that they sent of the Eucharist to them that were absent: and by the famous Story of *Serapion*, about the 200. year, it is apparent how necessary the Christians then thought it was to be guarded with this ho-
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ly *Viaticum*. Private Sacraments then are not proposed as necessary, but as highly expedient: which I think I have made appear they are.

N. But what can you say for kneeling in receiving? sure this looks like Superstition and Idolatry.

C. I confess this is the Article of them all, I have the least fondness on: but it is great uncharitableness to call it Idolatry, when such as do so, declare they neither believe Christ to be corporally present, nor do they intend any Worship to the Bread and Wine, but direct their worship to God and Christ, for that death which is therein shewed forth.

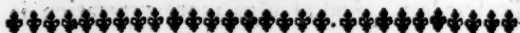
N. But why do not you sit? since our Saviour did institute this rite in the Table-gesture?

C. Since you do not exactly follow Christ, you ought not to stand at this: none therefore should alledge this, but such as Communicate leaning, and after supper, and in an upper Room. And though the Passover was ordained to be eaten by the Jews *standing with their loins girt, and their shoes on their feet*, yet without any written warrant, they changed that posture into the ordinary eating posture, and did eat the Passover leaning, in which our Saviour conformed to them. And if the Jews, against an expresse precept, without any countermand, may change the posture; sure the Christians who are lesse restrained as to outwards, may change the gesture, especially there being no command for it: and but a lame example, since our Saviour did not sit,

fit, but lean. And perhaps more veneration is due to that action, now that our Saviour is exalted, than he could have allowed of in his humiliation.

N. What can you say for holy dayes? can any man make dayes holy?

G. If by holy dayes you mean, portions of time so sacred, that in these dayes, our services are more acceptable to God than on other dayes; or that of their own nature they are holy, so that of it self it is a sin not to be particularly devout on these dayes, you have reason to say, none can make a day holy. And this was never asserted. But it is another thing to keep peculiar dayes of thanksgiving, for the great and signal mercies of the Gospel-dispensation. I confesse I am so dull, as not to be able to apprehend what evil can be in such customs. And it is undoubted, that in all ages and places of the Church, Christians have had a peculiar veneration for these Dayes. St. Paul saith of the legall holy Dayes, *he that regardeth a day, to the Lord he doth regard it*; And, if Moses his Feasts might have been kept *holy* to the Lord, much more may these be which the Church hath instituted. Beside, you know the observation of *Easter* and *Pentecost*, are according to clear History derived from Apostolical practices. And it appears, St. Paul hastened to be at *Jerusalem* to keep the feast of *Pentecost* there. And, from all this I may assume, that your dislike of these Festivals and the other Articles of *Perth*, is ill grounded.



DIALOGUE VI.

N. **I** See we have no reason to hope for any good from you, who are so fierce against us; but God be thanked, an ill-willed Cow hath short horns.

C. If by fiercenesse you mean a desire to see you ruined and destroyed, you mistake me quite; since there is none living, more averse from fierce and violent courses than my self. I love all Christians, who live according to the rules of the Gospel: And I pity such as I judge mistaken, knowing how subject I am to errour my self. I quarrel with no man for his opinion in these matters, which are, as the late incomparable King in his divine work calls them, *But the Skirts and Suburbs of Religion*. And as all the thoughts of that divine Book bewray an augustnesse, which speaks the Author a King indeed; so his moderation in these matters looks like the paternal clemency which becomes the Father of a Countrey; he then adviseth his Son, our Gracious Sovereign, thus, *Beware of exasperating any Factions, by the crossnesse and asperity of some mens passions, humours, or private opinions, imployed by you, grounded only upon the differences in lesser matters, which are but the Skirts and Suburbs of Religion: wherein a charitable connivance and Christian-tolleration often dissipats their strength, whom rougher opposition fortifies; and*
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puts the despised and oppressed party into such combinations, as may most enable them to get a full revenge on those they count their persecutors, who are commonly assisted by that Vulgar commiseration which attends all that are said to suffer under the notion of Religion. And a little after, Take heed, that outward circumstances and formalities of Religion, devour not all, or the best encouragements of Learning, Industry, and Piety. Thus that Great and glorious Prince.

N. By this it seems you are a Latitudinarian, and I have heard much ill of these new sort of people.

C. Truly I own no name, but that of Jesus Christ, in which I was baptized; and these are invidious Arts, to coyn names of parties, and to affix them on such as disown them; I am, and desire to be a sincere Christian, but of no party nor Sect. But if by latitude, you mean charity, truly I must tell you, I glory in it, which is no newer way, than the *new commandment* which our Saviour gave to his Disciples, to *love one another, as he loved them.*

N. I confesse they say you live very good lives, but you have dangerous and loose principles.

C. Are you not strange people, who fasten such Characters on men whose conversations you cannot disprove; for, what can you call an Atheist, but a man of dangerous and loose principles? these are uncharitable aspersions, as if not to be so hidebound and starcht on every trifle as you

are, were to be loose and dangerous men.

N. Some say you are strong witted people, and so they suspect you of Atheism.

C. It seems they are weak witted people who talk so; since though some foolish pretenders to wit, are Atheists, yet no sort of men discover their folly, as well as wickedness, so much as these do. And that cursed Pest is hated by none more than us, who perhaps can give better and more convincing accounts of these principles of Religion, that there is a God, a life to come, and that the Scriptures are the word of God, than these who so charge us. But what unchristian work is it, thus to disgrace us?

N. Many of you are suspect of Socinianism, for you all magnifie reason, and are often telling how rational a thing Christian Religion is, which they also do.

C. Indeed if to call Religion a rational worship, or reasonable service make a *Socinian*, we are such, and so was *St. Paul*: but as for the horrid errors of *Socinus* his School, touching the Trinity, Christs satisfaction, Gods prescience, &c. these we condemn and Anathematize: and we judge it most suitable to reason, that in these sublime Mysteries, Divine Revelations should be our rule. But notwithstanding of this, we will be very loath to deny that Christian Religion both in its Articles of Belief, and Precepts of Practice, is highly congruous to the dictates of right reason: And we judge to propose them shall be a convincing way to commend them

all clear-witted men. And certainly, God having created man rational, the highest accomplishment of his nature, which is Religion, must not be contrary, but suitable to his supreme faculty.*

N. It seems you are sound here, but I fear you *Latitudinarians* are Papists, at least *Cassandrians*.

C. You are resolved to charge us with one heinous thing or another, and when one fails you, you catch hold on another. We are far from that height of uncharitableness which some of you own, of damning all Papists; since they hold the foundation Jesus Christ, though they build upon it wood, hay and stubble: neither will we stiffly say, that all things controverted betwixt the reformed Churches and them, are matters of Salvation; yet in the greater controversies with them, we condemn them: such as are the Popes supremacy, the Churches infallibility, the Corporal presence, the worshipping Images, Saints, Angels, Purgatory, prayer for the Dead, withholding the Chalice, worshipping in an unknown tongue; these with many more we disprove and dislike as much, and perhaps on clearer grounds than you do. Yet we are such lovers of the unity of the Catholick Church, that we much honour and esteem all who have studied to bring things to a temper, though they have not come up to the desired length.

N. But how comes it, that amongst all the Articles of Popery, you never reckon the merits

of good works, nor Justification by them; since these are their chiefest errors?

C. I have not given a full enumeration of all that is wrong in that Church; but, for good works, though many of them, particularly the Jesuits, have written very harshly in that matter; and before the Reformation, generally all the Preachers did intollerably extol, not so much morally good works, as the superstitious and tyrannical injunctions of the Stepdame of Rome; yet now it is clear, the more sober of them expound Merits, in a sense which no Protestant can disown, to wit, that they are actions so acceptable to God, that he who is faithfull in his promises, will certainly reward them. Though I have no fondnesse on the term *Merit*, which way soever expounded, it still sounds somewhat too high for a creature in reference to his Creator, much more heartily do I reject the term *Condign*.

N. What say you of Justification by faith only? sure this is a fundamental matter.

C. There is nothing in Scripture more clearly set down than the Doctrine of Justification; but as it is generally explained, there is nothing more nice or subtile: Justification and condemnation are two opposite legal terms, relating to the Judgment shall be given out at the last day; for though we are said to be now justified, as the unbelieving are said to be condemned already, this is only that we are now in the state of such as shall be solemnly justified or condemned. Now

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at the great Day we must give an account of our actions, and we must be judged accordingly; but since all must be condemned, if God enter in Judgement with them, therefore God gave his Son to the death for us, that thereby we might obtain Salvation; *and all Judgement is by the Father committed to the Son*: And Jesus Christ hath proposed life through his death to as many as receive his Gospel, and live according to it. And as that which gives us a title to the favour of God, is the blood of Christ, so that which gives us an interest in his death, is faith, with a life conform to the rules of his Gospel, and the root of this new life, is a faith, *which worketh by love, purifyeth the heart, and overcometh the World*; and therefore Justification is ascribed to it in Scripture. Now, judge but a little what it is to have a right apprehension of things, since I have in a few plain words told you that which with much nicety swells amongst you to Volumes: And as this ascribes all to Christ, through whom it is that our sins are pardoned, our services accepted, and grace and glory conveyed to us; so also the necessity of a holy life is clearly declared, as being that whereupon we shall be solemnly judged, justified and absolved at the last day.

N. I think this is very clear, but why do not you use the terms of the Protestant Church? this looks like a humour of singularity amongst you, that you will not speak like other men.

C. Whether do you think it fitter in the Mysteries of faith to keep close to terms of Scripture

pure or not? since these, as they are the truest, so are the fittest and most expressive: but if we will speak in the language of men, I think the stile of the Catholick Church is to be chosen, rather than Modern and Scholastical expressions, which are too too horridly abused, as well by *Antinomians*, as by carnal Christians, who love well to hear of Salvation by the death of Christ, provided they be bound to do nothing themselves, that they may be saved.

N. You have sufficiently vindicated your self of Popery, but are you not *Arminians*?

C. Truly I believe both you and I may be good Christians, and not understand a word of these controversies. And certainly the great itch of multiplying and canvassing subtle questions in matters of Religion, hath proven one of the chief pests of the Church; it is good to be sober-minded. As for Gods Sovereignty in all things, but more especially in the conversion of souls, and the gracious influence of his Spirit, I do firmly believe it: I as firmly believe, that God is infinitely good and holy, and think I may well take his own Oath for it, that he takes no pleasure in the death of sinners: But how to reconcile these his Attributes, I confesse is beyond my capacity. God is an unfathomable Abylfe, and imperscrutable to any but himself: therefore as I do not doubt there are Three persons in one God, though I cannot reconcile that to *Aristotles* Logick; so I believe, God is Sovereign and absolute, as well as holy and just, though

though I cannot answer all objections. In a word, let this whole matter be thus transacted, and no article of faith is violated; *Let none of our good be ascribed to our selves, and none of our evil be imputed to God.*

N. I see if you have any errors, you have so much Legerdemain, that you are not easily discovered. But, our Ministers are more jealous of some of this new way of the latitude, than of any body; for, often in our Conventicles they bid us beware of Wolves in sheeps cloathing: and this is meant of you.

C. *Judge of the tree by its fruits* said our Saviour; Do not therefore upon jealousies and misrepresentations passe judgments; *for, who art thou that judgest another mans servant?* But I am now weary with wrangling, it being a thing much against my Genius; I will therefore leave these dry and arid matters, and talk a little with you on better Subjects.

N. I will hear you in these with all my heart; for though you have said many things that do much displease me, yet as uncharitable as you think me, I am full of kindness for you; and I love to hear good spoken by any body: therefore we will dispute no more.

C. Ah, how strangely is the world mistaken in matters of Religion! Some placing it wholly in debates, others in external forms; others in some private devotions, and others in a regulation of the outward man; but true Religion is power and life, and far above all these shadows. *The Kingdom*

dom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost ; it doth not levell at externals only, but secretly insinuates it self into the Soul ; whereas a divine seed it propagates, diffusing its vertue through the whole man : In a word, Religion was given of God to transform a man into the Divine likeness, and to a real participation of the Divine Nature.

N. What then is the great scope and design of Christian Religion?

C. God's method in clearing up this day of Salvation was indeed wonderful: many ages after the Creation, the world was overspread with darkness, and wrapped up in blind Idolatry, only as the wanne reflection of the Moon, with the twinklings of a few Stars, do give some radiance in the furthest absence of the Sun, so these darkest ages had still some of the remains of Nature's light ; and the holy Patriarchs were burning and shining lights : but darkness still covered the face of the earth. At length there was a dawning opened by Moses, whose greatest splendor was cast upon it, by the approaching Sun, the Messiah: Indeed the old dispensation was a great riddle, for all was managed then with great terroure, pomp and state : their call out of Egypt, and the promulging of the Law were dreadful, their Temple, Worship and Ceremonies were Majestick and Solemn ; but by none of these the doer could be made perfect : At length came the Sun of Righteousness, as a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel, and brought

brought to light life and mortality through his Gospel; the great designs whereof are, to beget in a man such apprehensions of the Divine Majesty, as might both possess him with the holy reverence becomes his great Name, and inspire him with a love and delight in him, that so man might be brought to a more free converse with God, and might be swallowed up in divine contemplations. The next thing in the Gospel, is to propose to us that stupendious contrivance of the redemption of the World through Jesus Christ, that we may adore him as *the author and finisher of our faith*. Beside, the Gospel came to mould us into such a lively conformity to Jesus Christ, that we may imitate him in all things, chiefly in his holiness, meekness, and humility: And further, the Gospel was designed as a cement and bond of perfection; to unite us all more closely, even beyond the natural ties, with those of brotherly-kindness and charity.

N. What then are the methods to be used by one that would lead a spiritual life?

C. This ought to be the great design of our lives; for, *wherein shall it avail us, if we shall gain the whole world, and lose our own souls?* The way then to purify our souls, is, not barely to affect a little vertue, or morality, but to apply our minds to God, that by frequent and deep contemplations of his glory, his excellent perfections may be derived into our souls. Be therefore much in stillness and abstraction of mind, that you may become of a thinking temper: give up
with

with passions, designs, and humours, and use much inward recollection; this at first will prove painful to you, but when once you have brought your mind into a serene and not easily agitated temper, you shall after that enjoy great quiet in divine converse.

N. What mean you by this converse with God?

G. You shall feel such a belief and sense of the divine perfections in your soul, as shall make the thoughts of God familiar and easie to you: your converse with him shall not only consist in prayers, and acts of worship, but you shall be often admiring him in his Attributes of Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, and chiefly his Love to you in Christ; which sense of God shall be as a fountain of living waters, ever jetting up divine thoughts into your mind: And these will not be crabbed, curious, or subtill speculations, but humble adorations, and divine imbraces, in such acts, as, *Thou art my God, my good God, I am thine, I will love thee above all things, and none but thee; thou art my joy and only delight.* Thus the more you converse with God, your acts will grow the simpler and the purer: it will not only be at some returns, morning or evening, or in publick Worship, that such thoughts will stir in you; but your heart will be full of them, and swimming in them, and they will rise natively in you. Hence will gush in upon your soul much inward sweetness of mind; you will be ever well pleased, because you will see God in all things, and you will

see all he doth is good ; you will therefore not only practise submission, but complacency and delight in all his wayes ; you will also rejoyce in the Divine Attributes, and glory in your interest in Heaven. Oh, how sweet will your hours then grow to you ! But debates and opinions and every thing that leads out the mind from that inward stillness, will become sapless to you.

N. Wherein consists that sweetness you say is to be found in divine converse ?

C. In the stillness wherewith the mind is overflowed, the clearness in the judgement, the steadfastness of the will, and calmness of the passions ; and then indeed a man lives in the perfection of his nature. But, beside these, there are some divine touches, wherein the soul is carried, as it were, out of her self, into most sublime heights, which cannot be uttered. But as for the affections of the sensible part, these may be very high in an impure mind ; for the natural devotion, especially if the person be Melancholick, a woman, or hysterical, will mount very high, but this devotion doth not humble nor purify the minde. Now, persons so divinely acted, are nothing in their own eyes, and willing to be nothing in the account of all the world, and all the world is nothing to them, *their God is their all* : they resign all to him, and are willing he dispose of them, and every thing else, as seems good in his eyes ; so they are not solicitous, nor disturbed, however squares go in the world. Finally, by the Elevation of this spiritual life, they are made to think

think not only placidly and serenely of death, but to long for it, accounting that the worst office death can do them, is to free them of a vile body, and to give them enterance into their heavenly Kingdom, this is the union of the Soul to God.

N. But how must we enter into that state of divine union?

C. Truly the gate is low, and the passage strait, we must be dispossessed of self-love, and of all intense affections to created objects; we must know and abhor our bygone escapes, we must by the humble applications of our souls to Jesus Christ, presse in by violence into this heavenly state, to which the passage is so narrow, that we must be stript of all the bulksome farthingales and trains of vanity ere we can enter: but when we shall be divested of these, the path of life will prove easie. Oh! how shall these pangs be recompensed, when we have broke thorow, and got into the blessed shades of the Garden of God? And, how infinitely more shall they be swallowed up, when getting beyond the dark regions of Mortality, we shall arrive at the uncreated light, which without a cloud or vail, shines above? Then our glorified bodies, with our no lesse purified Souls, being made like unto Angels, yea, unto a greater than Angels, shall be incessantly imployed in exercises, services and adorations, so far elevated beyond, and disproportioned to our highest achievements and enjoyments here, that in this imperfect state we cannot so much as frame suitable

able apprehensions of that unconceived Glory !
 Now we who have the possession of so great a
 joy, and the hope of a greater blessedness pro-
 posed to us, have we not all reason vigorously
 to set about the duties of a Christian life, not
 intangling our selves with thorny and harsh de-
 bates, which will but retard our progresse to
 sublimer states, and higher and undisturbed Re-
 gions ?

N. Is this all then that is required to accom-
 plish a Christian ?

C. This is but the Basis and root of a Chri-
 stian life, which is never barren nor unfruitfull :
 he then whose heart is thus fixed on God, his
 life and actions quickly declare that he hath
 not only the form but the power of Godliness
 in him : he lives above the world, in such a con-
 tempt of it, as discovers he hath greater riches
 and treasures in his design, than these are ; he hates
 the base and impure pollutions that abound in
 the world through lust, and undervalueth even
 the lawfull pleasures and enjoyments of sense :
 he sets no value on things in themselves, riches
 and poverty, shame and contempt are equally
 welcome to him, the one doth not sink him,
 nor can the other swell him : his actions and dis-
 courses have that candor, ingenuity and good-
 ness in them, as convince all, that the fear of
 God is before his eyes. Finally, he lives in the
 world, as out of the world, and above the world :
 His humility also testifieth, that in nothing he
 doth, he seeks or regards himself ; he doth not
 hang

hang out his piety nor good actions to publick view, but wraps them up in unaffected self-denial. He courts not applause, nor is he fretted with contempt, but is willing that none but God, for whom he doth all, know his actions, and with a virginal modesty shuns and rejects the praises which are undesired, as well as undeserved: he flies the crouds and publick scenes, that in corners he may find that which by venting in a throng, is often evaporat and lost. And as he doth not cowardly stoop to mean things, so he doth not stubbornly refuse the poorest office God calls him to: he peaceably obeyeth the publick Father of his Countrey, and the Ghostly Fathers of his Soul: he undervalueth none but himself, neither are his ears pained with applauses given to others, nor itching for them to himself. His charity also appeareth in his readiness to do good to all men, looking on that as one of the greatest conformities to the Divine Nature: He relieveth the poor with his Goods, the perplexed with his Advice, the oppressed with his Assistance, the disconsolat with his Sympathy; and all with his Prayers. He judgeth rashly of none, he doth not easily believe, but quickly pardoneth an injury: he is not soon irritated, but readily pacified: he confineth not his charity to a party, but extendeth it to all Christians. This is a rude Character, containing some of the fairer Lines of a Christian-life; by which you may see wherein Christian Religion consists,

consists, and how far even those who pretend most loudly to it, recede from it.

N. What say you of his Devotions, both private and publick?

C. In his secret retirements he often revieweth and examineth his actions, that discovering what hath been defective and amiss in him, he may be humbled for it, and quickened to new vigour and alacrity in Divine Services: he begs the divine love through Jesus Christ, by whom he makes all his addressees to the Throne of Grace; he offers up himself to God by pure and free resignations, that he may dispose of him as pleaseth him; he imploreth the Divine Grace, and assistance for mortifying all sins, overcoming all temptations, and advancing in every thing that is acceptable and well-pleasing to God: he also offers up his praises to God for all his mercies, chiefly for that unvaluable one of the Redemption of the world through Jesus Christ: he prayeth also for the Catholick Church, his King, Countrey, and Friends. This he performs not as an homage or vassalage which he must do, but out of pure delight in God and Divine exercises: neither doth he rest on these, as all he owes God; but besides, he orders all he doth for his Glory, and is often bending his minde to an application to God in all his wayes: And this is his secret and inward devotion. He worships God in publick, that he may avowedly own his dependance on him, and his union

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with

with his Church : he goeth to the holy place, not out of custome or formality, but that he may jointly with others, acknowledge and adore his Maker and his Redeemer; and gives not only an external concurrence with the Worship in Voice, Gesture, or Presence, but his heart saith *Amen* to his lips and profession.

N. I confesse I finde it much more pleasing and edifying to talk on these heads, than on our doubtful disputations; and therefore I will bid an endlesse farewell to them.

C. I was to have desired that of you: for though my affection to your hath at present drawn from me a great deal of contentious discourse; yet I finde no pleasure in it; and therefore as I seldom in my thoughts remembre these matters, so here I put a point, and will never resume them again. *Let us therefore provoke one another to Charity and good Works.* We have a better exercise for our tongues, with them we are to *blesse God even the Father*; let us not therefore utter any thing with them that may seem to curse man, that was made after the similitude of God.

N. Yet your pains are not wholly lost: for though I am not altogether changed as to my Principles; yet you have brought me to a greater temper in things wherein I must confesse I was unmeasuredly furious: but I will henceforth study to draw in my minde from every distraction, and more vigorously pursue the great end of my Being.

C.

C. If this be your temper, you and I cannot disagree, did our thoughts, as to other things, differ never so widely: And I pray God, keep you and me both in this temper long, but now we must part for a while, it is like we may shortly meet again, if not on earth, at least in heaven: So I bid you heartily adieu.

POSTSCRIPT.

THese *Dialogues* were the hasty product of some idle hours, wherein the Author thought fit to gather in a few words, the matters which now creat us so much trouble, and to represent the Arguments of both parties candidly; which he hopes he hath done. He protests he hath no design to wrong either party or person,

son, but meerly to propose these matters to others, in the same light wherein they appear to himself: had his design been to disgrace persons or wayes, he would have done it at another rate; but he abhorreth such a thought. If these papers grow publick, and be of use to any, he desires no thanks as he expects no rewards: and for the Censures of persons concerned, he will shroud himself from these with the vail of *one unconcerned.*

F I N I S.



A

PINDARICK ODE

Upon Contentions in matters
of Religion, by a friend of
the Authors, and a zealous
promoter of all designs for
Peace and Love.

I.

S Hall that which was design'd to end our toils,
Increase our flames, and raise new broils;
And must we triumph in our Brethrens Spoils?
Women are said by contraries to walk,
So now Religion which Heaven intends
To quiet minds, all hearts to quarrel bends;
And to contentious talk.
And as the feuds of Brethren hottest are,
(Where concords ought to be, there harshest proves the jarr)
So Nations Christned into unity,
And twisted in fraternal ties,
Yet do these Sacred bonds despise:
And the endearing names of Brethren all bely.

II.

Great were disorders which at Babel sprang,
Each did his Mothers Tongue forget;
Brother to Brother spake a stranger Dialect,

Am

A Pindarick Ode.

And new coin'd words only the ear did wound.
In vain it was to speak, and all grew mutes,
And man seem'd to descend to rank of bruits.
The Gospel came to heal this breach,
And Canaans hallowed stile mankind did teach;
At first all seem'd made of a piece;
One heart and soul them did inspire,
Free was the peaceful company from warlike ire,
When charity was all their fire.
The Heavenly dew still moistened the fleece.
While they sought only how to propagate their kind,
Midst all their Hymns no discord could one find.
But when the wretched Arts of Humane Policy,
Mingled with primitive integrity,
They by unhallowed tools began to build
Their fabriques, and by Laws of State
Religion did adulterate.
Then did incensed Heavens 'gainst them rage,
And put an early period to the golden age:
All in disorder ravel'd out,
The Church grew a tumultuous rout.
And all with cloven Tongues did speak:
Fierce wrath prevail'd, and Gospel-force grew weak;
And all its harmony died in a groan:
Oh strange! even Paradise becomes a towride Zone.

III.

Jesus blest names were not their only stiles,
They left his Standart, and were rang'd in files,
Under the Banners of dividing names,
And quench'd in angry heats were divine flames,
Some quarrel'd only about doubtful words,
But to decide the matter, us'd swords:
Others 'bout Logick niceties did contend,

A Pindarick Ode.

Yet such poor stuff put to their love an end :
And while some plea'd the practice of small forms,
Did their unformal pleas occasion Storms.
Wondrous Metamorphose !
St. James counts lust the source of Warre,
But now Religion proves the cause of jarre.
Inverted Chymistry !
Which turns the Gold to base alloy.

Must Rome be damn'd as Antichrist,
Because it to unerring Chair pretends ;
And forth as Oracles its dictates sends ?
While each 'mong us to that height raise their crest,
And do expect that all to them submit,
Conceiting that to errorr proof's their wit.
But once a Woman did usurp that Chair,
That stain wipe off could never any care :
Yet now 'gainst us that Sex conspires,
And to our Crown with insolence aspires.
Each Dame a Sybill grows, and doth refuse
To stoop to wisest sort, and our just yoke abuse.

The names of factions are insus'd
In harmless infancy, which early thus abus'd,
Retains the venome it from breast derives,
All roads are block't by which the truth arrives.
Fond prejudice doth so bemist,
Trepaning custome doth so twist
Their minds to errorr, that it vain
And bootless labour proves them to regain.

IV.

Disputing is as Oyl to raging flame ;
They glory in their sufferings pompous name,
And by resisting do increase their fame.
All gentleness they think a cheat,

And

A Pindarick Ode.

And dread the enemy most when he doth treat.
God bleſs me, what diſeaſe is this,
Whoſe cure all Medicines do miſs !

They'r wanton if we cordials uſe,
Sure, goodneſs they abuſe ;
Or if to abate the feveriſh heat,
Some noiſome blood we would let out ;
Then grows the madneſs of the franrick rout.
If ſines as Medicines their bowels drain,
Then they aloud of grinding do complain.

This ſtrange diſtemper doth all ſkill deſy,
Phyſicians hopes ſtill falſify.

But as a joynt which Gangrene doth corrupt,
Muſt be cut off from the ſound lump,
Better the body grow a ſtump,
Than by ſuch members bankerrupt.

Yet often doth this Hydra multiply
When cropt, one head to ſeven will fructify.
Or as a tree which with new force doth ſpring,
When lopt by pruner is its overſpreading wing ;
So doth this poiſonous Weed Bill further ſpread,
And as the Camomine, grow the more it's tread.
The Cockle ſtill with Wheat will blend,
Till winnowing flames to mixture put an end.
Good Grains with Tares may chance to be pull'd up,
Delay their doom till brimfull be their cup.

Then chaffed juſtice ſhall the chaff devour,
And Angel-reapers bring the juſt to Heavens floor.

F I N I S

